AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1937

Says Joseph again: "I had better," says he, "be going to buy a little food for the Virgin." He went thereupon, and he was on the streets and stones of Bethlehem until the shank of the day. And when he was there it was he saw another great troop coming toward him, and they talking one to another.

And it is this they were saying: "We have sought," says they, "in all the city, and Whom we sought we have not found. Let us go,then, outside the city," says they, "and seek yet again if He be without." At that Joseph says to them: "Would you have any milk to sell?" says he. "None at all," says they. "Would you have any eggs or cheese?" says Joseph. "Good man," says they, "why are you at us? Not for trafficking are we come, and not that but a marvelous strange story troubles us," says they. "We are seeking Him and we find Him not, for it is wonderful and it is unknown He is," says they. "If it is unknown He is, happen it is He is with me in my house," says Joseph. And says he to them: "Who are you and whence are you come?"

"We," says they, "are shepherds of the town of Bethlehem, and last night we were atop the height in the East of the plain of Bethlehem, which is a thousand paces eastward out of Bethlehem. There we were in it watching our sheep, and we all in one place, some of us sleeping, some on watch, some telling stories one to another, some playing music and singing. And after the rising of the moon upon us it was in the middle of the night we every one saw a cloud of light from the East directly in front of us that brightened the whole plain of Bethlehem. It is thus, then, was that cloud, that a form beautiful and splendid and sovereign and glorious was at its heart, and there were still many and various music in that cloud, and as sweet was one music as another.

"And after the coming of that very great light upon us, fear and dread took hold of us, and we put our faces against the ground all. And then it was the voice of an angel spoke from the cloud: 'Be not fear nor terror on you,' says he, 'for to tell a story to you and to all men it is I came, which is a story there has not been found its equal or like from the beginning of the world until tonight. For there is this day born the Saviour Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, in the city of David in Bethlehem of Judea, for a help of the races of man died in Adam, which is God of gods, salvation of mankind, strength of strength, man over men, king of kings, meek soldier without wrath or pride or pomp. 'Go to Him,' says he, 'and you shall find Him and little cloths of white linen about Him, and He cradled'. And when he made an end of speaking it was as one with him the angelic host sang, and the music of it very true and very sweet: 'Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.' "

So were the shepherds a-telling of that tale to Joseph, and they said: "We have searched the city," says they, "and found not Him we are seeking." Says Joseph to them: "Not hidden from you is the thing God showed you. Come now and look upon what you seek," says he. "Blessed are you," says the shepherds, "for it is to you first God has been made known, whence the greatest good has come and will come."

Thereupon before them went Joseph to the door of the house. And behind him go the shepherds and into the house and a great welcome with them. But Joseph abides without after them, and he turned his face up to Heaven, saying: "Almighty God, great is this marvel; to us it seemed there was no knowledge of the birth of the Lord to any other but ourselves; and behold, the shepherds heard of it and they a thousand paces eastward out of Bethlehem!"

A Middle-Irish Homily, from the Leabhar Breac, *or* Speckled Book of Duniry, *compiled about 1400, from various ancient sources. It is here newly rendered by John Boon.*

COMMENT

CHRISTMAS is our essentially Christian feast. Its very name in our English language allows of no equivocation. Christmas means Christ, His Mother and St. Joseph, His foster-parent and protector. It means a home, a family and all the reverence, stability and sanctity that cling around the words, home and family. True, there was little of stability and security in the first Christian home in Judea. Yet the very transitoriness and insecurity proclaimed its independence and superiority to city or community. Bethlehem had no place for the first Christians and the cave and crib became thereby symbols of a society more closely cleaved to Christianity than any state-alliance could effect. And so it has come about that every attack on the fundamentals of Christian life has struck at Christmas and the Nativity. Russia outlaws Christmas as it destroys the notion of the Christian family. The Nazis would introduce the pagan cult of narrowing race and blood, and find no place for a child and littleness. But Christmas is a cave, a crib, a child—no stalwart Thor or Woden. Christmas is the Holy Family and so must be as long as Christianity survives. We may well envy other countries their names of Christian feasts but on this name, Christmas, the advantage is all ours. It sums up in that blessed name all that is essential in the feast. Christ's Mass. Christ is our all. With Him we conquer. The Mass, His greatest gift of the Incarnation. And so in days when all the happiness and blessedness of peace and love was enjoyed by a faithful England, the most apt and meaningful salutation was: Merry Christmas.

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THE liturgy of Christmas focuses our attention upon two miracles of God's mercy. Not only upon one, be it noted; but upon two. It is a twin theme that runs through the celebration of the feast, and the Church thanks God not only for the coming of the Lord but also for another and equally astonishing gift to men. To be sure it is to the Bethlehem scene that the liturgy points first of all—to the Infant, to the manger, to the young mother, to the overwhelming truth that the Word is made flesh and dwells amongst us. But there is a second motif in the Church's prayer, and the Catholic who fails to detect it misses the beauty, the exultation, and even the very essence of the Christmas feast. The fulness of the blessed mystery is this—not only that God becomes man, but that men become Gods (the words are St. Augustine's, not ours); not only that God takes a human nature, but that men are enabled thereby to share the Divine nature; not only that the Son of God is made flesh, but that all flesh is lifted up to the Sonship of God. Beautifully the liturgy insists upon the tremendous parallel—that the Word participates in our humanity in order that we may participate in his Divinity. That the Lord empties himself, taking the form of a servant, so that we servants might be filled with the life of Grace. That God is humanized that we may be divinized. The Church expresses all this with a lovely Latin phrase: *admirabile commercium*. It means "the wondrous interchange" between God and the race of Adam. And it is this that is emphasized in the liturgy. This interchange is mentioned in the Secret prayer of the first and second Mass; it is the theme of Saint John's Gospel read in the third; it is the basic idea in Saint Leo's sermon in the breviary. And as the priest mingles wine and water, he recites a prayer which historians tell us was once used only in the Nativity Mass. It asks that we may become sharers in the Divinity of Him Who on Christmas morning deigned to share in our humanity.

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Most Rev. John F. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Ind., is the founder and editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, and the author of several books.

Richard Pattee, Professor at the University of Puerto Rico, is an authority on Hispanic America.

David Goldstein, convert from Judaism and Socialism, founded the Catholic Evidence Guild, now the Catholic Campaigners for Christ.

MAE WEST deserves banishment to the exterior darkness, to the dog-house or the pig-pen. May it be a long day and a longer night before she is permitted to eructate before the microphone. On December 12, in the Chase and Sanborn hour, she was more vulgar and more revolting than she has been since her appearances in her first ribald movies. Not only did she do herself dirt, but she involved little Charlie McCarthy in it, and she linked herself up with Don Ameche who, on November 28, had affirmed: "Entertainment never need be off color." As described by one correspondent, the Mae West exhibition was "a tawdry, sexual and blasphemous account of the Genesis story of the fall of Adam and Eve." Thousands of people, who regularly listen with pleasure to this Sunday evening program, snapped off their radios in utter disgust. Tens of thousands, we calculate, will seek a new brand of coffee unless Chase and Sanborn apologize, with reassurance.

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NATIONALIST Spain was described by AMERICA and the *Nation* in their respective issues of December 11. Bernard Faÿ, an internationally recognized authority on government and democracy, wrote the article for AMERICA. He traveled through Nationalist Spain, as he attests, "to study it by myself." He had no connection with the Nationalist Government, and made no commitments to it. "For several weeks," he asserts, "I went in my car from city to city, from village to village, from inn to inn." His narrative is worthy of credence. Leigh White wrote the article for the *Nation*. He is, says the *Nation*, "in Barcelona, acting as a translator for the Loyalist Government." Mr. White never set a foot in Nationalist Spain, never spoke to the Nationalist authorities, never investigated the conditions in Nationalist territory. He secured all the material of his article from the propaganda department of the Loyalist Government and the gossip prevalent in Barcelona. The three pages of Leigh White in the *Nation* are the lowest depths of the low level on which the *Nation* is now operating. They are recommended to Harold Lord Varney as an appendix to his illuminating article, *Our "Liberal" Weeklies*, in the *American Mercury* for December.

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THE SOVIET UNION held its first direct, secret election on December 12. It was the most democratic election in world history, carried through precisely according to the regulations of the most democratic constitution ever devised on this globe. The list of candidates was headed by Comrade Joseph Stalin. These candidates were one-hundred percent democrats. The voters numbered 90,000,000. The voters were also one-hundred percent democrats. Since the candidates were very well satisfied with the democracy of the voters, and the voters were eulogistic about the democracy of the candidates, the free, untrammeled, secret ballots were cast in an atmosphere of order, decorum, precision and festivity. Lunches were served at the polling places, pictures and flowers adorned the election rooms, nurseries were provided for babies and play rooms for the older children in the election buildings. After the voting, the ballots were counted meticulously. To everybody's surprise, Comrade Joseph Stalin and every candidate was elected. There was not a single vote cast that was not democratic; 90,000,000 democratic voters unanimously elected the democratic candidates. "What election in what country for what candidate," announced over the radio the Election Commission, "ever has given a one-hundred percent response!" Two hundred and sixty airplanes and 100,000 automobiles and trucks carried the 90,000,000 ballots to Moscow. Every ballot confirmed the vote registered on the first ballot. As a result, Comrade Stalin and his comrades won a glorious one-hundred percent democratic victory.

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FEATURING, as might be expected, the potential field open to higher education in the furthering of international peace, the Gates symposium, sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania, unearthed another quality of our higher education that should not be overlooked. As part of the bicentennial Benjamin Franklin celebration of the University, expressions of opinion were invited from twenty-five countries, through their diplomatic representatives, accredited to the United States. Whatever the explanation, the mid-Europe smaller States came out pronouncedly for the old classic idea of a general education as opposed to departmentalized specialization. Said Faik Konitza, of Albania:

> The modern university in general tends more and more to become an advanced school of applied sciences and professional specialization, drifting away from the old and to my mind higher conception of the university as a seat of general culture and disinterested studies. What used to be called the humanities is dying out and I do not think that it is finally conducive to the higher interests either of a given nation or of humanity at large.

In a similar vein, the Minister of Czechoslovakia, Vladimir Hurban, asserted that the problem of higher education is not solved by the mere teaching and acquisition of pure and practical science. "It will be solved," he said, "when the universities based on humanistic ideals following those of Comenius, will develop citizens whose moral and ethical qualities will contribute to the good not only in their own country but the world over." It will be evident to all that the two features of general education stressed in the above quotations have been the Catholic ideal.

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WHILE CAESAR SLEPT THE KING OF KINGS WAS BORN

A reverie on the eternal mystery of Bethlehem

WILLIAM J. BENN, S.J.

AN orphan child of street and roadways, I am inured to weather, want and rebuff. A little beggar indeed, ready to help anyone, anywhere, in anything, if there is coin to be had, or a hand-out or a shake-down for the night, even for friendship's sake as the shadows of night lengthen on the white roads.

It is a cold, brisk evening near mid-winter, cold yet beautiful as such dying days can be in Palestine. I am on the road to Bethlehem for the Edict of Caesar will bring visitors here to enrol and pay their head tax. Ahead of me on the road is a modest couple. A man in the full strength of manhood, with a look of dignity and the strongly etched features of a tradesman. He is afoot, leading a donkey on which is seated a woman, cloaked, deeply veiled. I approach, offer my services which are respectfully declined.

As they move away, I keep looking their way. I am loath to be parted from them. As I look, a bundle strapped at the donkey's side loosens, falls to the ground, unnoticed by the travelers. I pounce on it, return it, renew my request to help. "Let me carry this for you to the town, it is close here now." "But, you see, we have nothing to give you." "Oh I beg of you, I am only too happy to be with you." "Well, then, let us see." The two consult by looks and the man says: "Come, then, in God's name." I am delighted, accompany them with light step. I dare not speak, yet thoughts rush in on me. My companions are also silent. Once only, Joseph says to the young woman: "Are you tired, Mary?" "Don't fear for me, Joseph," she answers, "I am well, and God protects us." So, at least, I know their names now.

I soon look around to say: "We are at the town. This is Bethlehem." I proudly lead my friends to the public inn. There is unusual noise and activity, a filled house. The master is at the gate, gives a hasty glance at the humble pair and forestalls Joseph with a head-shake: "The inn is filled—no place." Joseph, mindful of Mary's condition, makes a gentle remonstrance. "No place!" answers the owner, now more decisively. They turn to the road. I follow, but my feet are leaden and angry tears are in my eyes. I soon look back and the inn-keeper already welcomes a noisy group that has arrived with camels and a costly retinue. My heart is sore now and I shout back: "So there is always room for the rich." With a winsome gravity, Joseph bids me be still.

Strange to tell, nothing disturbs the peace of my companions and this is working some strange change in me. But time is passing, dark is fast approaching. Weary of the search, I have one last idea. My own cattle shake-down by the cliff. I am first ashamed to have thought of it. But necessity makes me brave to suggest it. The place is quickly reached. I help fixing them in their new-found shelter. I light a few faggots I have gathered on the way in a corner of the stable, where are rocks from former fires. The travelers make me share of their simple food. Then I start to leave them alone. I will stand guard at the entrance. But they will not have it so. So I retire to a corner of the shelter. Joseph fixes a simple bed on which Mary reclines in her cloak. Joseph rests a short distance away, looks towards Mary with reverential, awed respect. Motionless, I look on both with bated breath. I am become a mystery to myself. Never have I felt so happy before. Something strange works within me. The story of Israel's hopes, of her prophecies and her future, occupies me. Israel's God enlightens my mind. I begin to see and know—feebly, darkly, with a tumult of contradiction.

Joseph is the "just man," the virgin spouse, the wise protector, the faithful, humble instrument of a great mystery. Mary is the Virgin, by excellence, become a Mother by the very power of God. In the wide world no other souls are so dear in God's eyes as these two poor travelers. But above all, what a revelation—rather revolution! The Child, which I now know will soon be born, is He, The Great One, The Desired of Nations, the Messiah Whom our fathers invoked, for Whom our prophets longed and our poets sang, for Whose coming our race looked during drear, uneventful years. Oh, if He were only to be born here, now. But it is too much to expect—that I should be the first of my race to see Him. No, surely, It must be a dream, a delusion. The Royal Son of David, cannot, must not, so be born. His foster-father, a mechanic. His mother, poor. His birthplace a cave, my poor shelter, fit for animals and me. Can such be the retinue to sur-

round His birth? Shall He come here on purpose to be born, more obscurely and with greater misery than at Nazareth? My poor head is wearied by a riot of conflicts between my Jewish, worldly ideas and this still, strange voice that comes from within. But this inner light triumphs. I can no more doubt. God, our God, wants His own Son born *thus*.

Joseph awakes me from my reverie. The fire is nigh extinguished. I go out. I am in the night again and I can tell from the sky that the midnight hour is nigh. I gather some brambles and dried grasses. A new wonder greets my return to the cave. The whole place is illumined by a light, whose source invisible, streams into every corner from the bed where Mary rests. I catch Mary's face. It irradiates unspeakable peace and joy. And then, oh wondrous blessing, my eyes rest on the Babe, "the dear little one," already wrapped in the garments of Mary's love. I know it is He, the Expected One, the Messiah. *My Eyes Rest on My Saviour.*

Need I ask who He is? "A little Child is born to us, a little Child is given *me.*" He is the fairest Child of man, yet a Babe, helpless with all its helplessness. Mary has clothed the little body, not indeed the "body of sin," though resembling it. "Being made to a likeness of the sinful flesh." A crib for cradle; a manger, His throne, more correctly, His altar. "He shrank not from the oxen's stall, He lay within the manger bed." Poverty, weakness, abasement, dependence. I myself, the street-urchin, beggar, had better at my birth.

Who is He? Do I need ask further? "God of God, Light of Light, Eternally Generated, Consubstantial with the Father." "The Splendor of the Father's Glory." "The Perfect Image of the Father." "The Substantial Word in Whom all things find their support, their consistency, their cohesion." "The Admirable One, the Master of the Divine Counsels, the Almighty, the Father of the Future Age, the Prince of Peace." He is the Word made flesh, "the Celestial Word that comes forth without quitting the right hand of the Father." The true Son of man from his Mother's flesh is personally the coeternal Son of God, "Who descends from heaven and is none the less in heaven."

And His work? What could He do, a Babe of one hour? Yet He creates unceasingly, conserves, cooperates, sustains all things in their proper form and being, applies causes, necessary and free to action. This stable, the Roman Emperor who unwittingly effected His birth here, yes, even His Mother exist and continue by His Power. All is His work, I may not doubt it, done inseparably and indivisibly in union with Father and Holy Ghost, for He is The Son, the Word, God. For nine months all the faculties of that soul have been awake, thrilling in delighted unison with each wish of the Father and every motion of the Holy Spirit. And now that soul speaks rapturously to the Father: "Sacrifices and offerings no longer were acceptable: a body Thou hast fitted for Me. Then I said, behold I am here to do Thy Holy Will." And now, better, He speaks to *me,* the little beggar: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, see how I have attracted thee, having mercy on thee." "I am born for your sake, for you I am a little Babe, the Son of your First Parent." "Fear not, God has not sent Me to judge the world but to save it." "I have the word of eternal life and this life I come to bring. But to receive it you must change your life, become in humility like little children, a little Babe, as Me."

But the manger is not only the pulpit from which the Babe speaks, it is also the altar whereon the sacrifice for man's sin, for my sin, begins and whereon it finds all its efficacy. God is there in the Babe reconciling the guilty world to Himself. There will be no more efficacy on the Cross. God called for adequate reparation. Well, here it is, all-sufficient, complete in essence and efficacy for Redemption. The infinite equals the infinite. The mute sighs of the Child are not a whit less effectual than the blood shed on Calvary. The Mother could now raise "the little host" and say with the priest at Mass: "Through Him, and with Him and in Him are to Thee Omnipotent God, Eternal Father, all Honor and Glory." Yet this efficacy must not be misunderstood. In itself the Crib has full efficacy and God could count it as full payment for man's sins, but God had willed to accept the Cross and not the Crib as adequate reparation.

And His Kingdom? Is it not folly to think of it here and now? Yes, if one thinks of a racial, localized kingdom embracing the narrow limits of a blood cult. Or, if one thinks of a religion of class hatred and revolution of brother against brother. Here at the crib I must put off my racial prejudices and only then can I understand and become part of the Kingdom. For the Father had given Him "an eternal and universal Kingdom—a Kingdom of Truth and Life, a Kingdom of Holiness and Grace, a Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace." The little King delivers resounding blows to the three-fold concupiscence of the eyes, of the flesh, of the ego. And I know—and it is the most persistent impression left with me—that unless I see with Him in this, the whole drama of this wonderful night is lost for me. Here He is reconciling heaven with earth in a wondrous League of Nations, founded on no racial myth but on the reality of our kinship with the Father through the Humanity of the Son, thus "bringing together the Highest with the Lowliest."

My reverie is interrupted by the Angelic Chant. The Shepherds have come. I am glad, exceeding so, and now I am emboldened to move in and kneel with hands joined to theirs around the Centre of the world. And as I look on the little face, I get with the single-minded shepherds a parting lesson from their Shepherd King. Henceforth, full and adequate glory to God. Glory to God in Heaven. And on earth—here, Peace. Peace with God, first, and then as a result, peace with one another, with oneself. I know it is the Babe Who has conquered the old enmity, slays it in Himself; Who by immolating Himself, will reconcile and pacify in His Blood; Who even now reconciles by the offering He makes of Himself. Peace to men of good will, of God's (good) will, who will in this Child win God's favor. Nothing remains—except my poor Adoration, Contemplation, Love—Peace.

ANOTHER FASCIST LABEL FALSELY PASTED ON BRAZIL

Dictatorships are nothing new in Hispanic America

RICHARD PATTEE

THE decision of the Government of Getulio Vargas to suspend the elections in Brazil, continue the state of siege and put into effect a new constitution, has been heralded in many parts as the long expected transplantation of the totalitarian institutions of Europe to the soil of the new world. Branded as Fascist, or at least as semi-Fascist, the opinion has prevailed that an American Republic has at last succumbed to the strong arm methods in vogue in certain sections of Europe.

From one point of view it is possible that this event in Brazil is not an unmixed disaster, if it does nothing else than focus attention on the necessity and urgency of eliminating the fast and loose use of the term *Fascism,* which has come to be employed as a universal term of disparagement for anything not of the extreme Left. Just as in the past Communism was the blanket term that covered everything from the mildest, palest pink to the most flamboyant crimson, so Fascism has been converted into an epithet, a stock phrase, a word of reproach, derision and condemnation with scant regard for the exact political elements that make up authentic Fascism. The fact that the new Brazilian state rejects Communism does not make it Fascist.

It is perfectly clear that the fear of Communism or, at least, an alleged fear of violent Leftism prompted the determination of President Vargas on November 10. It is extremely difficult to say to what extent Communism was actually present in the unrest and disorder that have characterized Brazil for the past three years. However, whether Communism was a real or a hypothetical danger, is not the fundamental issue at all. The question of vast import is whether the government set up as a reaction to this danger represents Fascism or not. When the accusation is launched against the new order as Fascist, the implication is made that there are no two solutions to a given political conflict except Communism or Fascism. This interpretation of the absolute dualism of political institutions has been rejected by Brazil, where insistence is made that the war against Communism has led to a mere modification of the existing republican institutions, with no attempt to import the Fascist model.

The evidences that disprove the Fascist character of the recent movement are not difficult to enumerate. First of all, the prolongation of the presidential term for another six years came directly from the executive. President Vargas cut across party lines, disrupted the presidential campaign and personally proclaimed the continuation of his own regime. In other words, the new state of affairs in Brazil is not the work of a party, of a movement or even of an ideology, but simply a personal perpetuation in power. The new constitution, if read, carefully, will be seen as a document establishing a high degree of presidential control, with a marked concentration of authority in the executive and a simultaneous loss of power by the individual states. Brazil has followed a procedure very much in vogue in Hispanic America.

More striking still is the fact that the new regime has rejected the one openly Fascist organization existent in the republic: the Integralists. If the new state were as Fascist as it has been depicted, it would seem reasonable that the well knit and powerful Integralist party under Plinio Salgado, would be the instrument of that change and would now occupy a position similar to the National Socialist organization in Germany and the Fascist party in Italy. Exactly the contrary has taken place. The Integralists have been shorn of much prestige, and forced to abandon their political activity. Moreover, the basic conditions that produced Fascism in Europe do not exist in Brazil.

Without attempting more than a summary, it would seem that there are generally a number of circumstances that are found wherever Fascism has triumphed. There is the growth and development of an ideology, represented in a party organization. The shirted groups in Italy and Germany are examples of this evolution. In both cases, a strong, highly organized and effective party movement preceded the actual taking over of the Government. In Europe this process has been favored by a deep-rooted national tradition, ancient hatreds and collective aspirations, on which Fascism has played with consummate skill. In America this condition is lacking. New nationalities, unexploited resources and scattered populations do not produce the cohesion necessary for the full flowering of this particular political phenomenon. In Brazil Vargas was not the *Duce* of any party.

In addition, both in Italy and Germany, Fascism was the product of desperation. The humiliation of the Reich and the crushing burdens of the peace gave strength to the Nazi claims. The chaos of post-war Italy was obviously fertile soil for the doctrine of force and authority. These circumstances do not exist in Brazil or in any other Hispanic-American country. Temporary recessions or passing economic reverses cannot be compared to the inertia and distress experienced in the stifling atmosphere of Europe after 1919. Brazil is faced by no land-hungry over-population, no irredentism and no colonial aspirations that have been thwarted. It would be difficult to find a single point of contact between the conditions that have produced Fascism in Europe and those that have led to the political transformation of last month in Brazil.

Dictatorship in some form or other has been the normal thing in most of the countries of Central and South America. The distance between the theoretical democracy of the individual constitutions and the realities, has always been one of the standing contradictions of government in this hemisphere. It is an illusion to speak of the New World today as a bulwark of democracy against trends toward extremism. While the trappings of democratic practice have often been retained and the constitutional bases preserved, the actual functioning of government has been strikingly different. Even in those countries where Leftist tactics have been developed, in Mexico, Ecuador and Chili, this fact does not imply Communism. Even Leftism in the New World has suffered changes and modifications that make it scarcely recognizable in contrast with its European counterpart. Even in Mexico Communism of the orthodox sort is not the rule.

South of Mexico are to be found states in the true dictatorship fashion. In Guatemala, General Jorge Ubico rules directly and personally. In Honduras, Tiburcio Carias legislates, exiles and governs according to the best dictatorship standards. In Salvador, Maximiliano Martínez exercises a like authority, while in Nicaragua, torn by frequent war and many dictatorships, General Anastacio Somoza recently came to power, following the expulsion of his predecessor. Can these governments be called Fascist? Fascism is clearly much more than mere dictatorship. In every case mentioned, the American republics have developed no philosophy of the state, no doctrine, no symbolism. In none of them is there a corporate state and, aside from a highly concentrated presidential authority, nothing essentially Fascist is to be found.

Most of these dictators are army men, ruling adroitly, vigorously and often intelligently. Material peace, progress and internal tranquillity, maintained if necessary by force, are virtually the only ideological foundations of these states. No elaborate party structure and no abstruse, complicated system of political dogma is to be found. Men like General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, the prototype of the contemporary Hispanic American dictator is unembarrassed by complexities of this nature. None of them has been preceded to power by black-shirt marches or by interminable protestations in a *Mein Kampf*. As has been the case throughout the nineteenth century, personalities mean everything in Hispanic-American politics; ideas very much less.

Costa Rica and Panama maintain the elements of political democracy. President Cortés, of Costa Rica, has been accused of harboring Reds and of turning Fascist. He was denounced as a tool of Rome when he silenced the more torrid outpourings against Italy, as unbecoming in a Republic at peace with that state. Panama, in spite of its heterogeneous population and young traditions, manages to a remarkable degree to avoid extremism. The only Republic on the continent of South America that has refrained from invoking dictatorship, either of the Left or of the Right, is Colombia. Here the full play of party politics, of conflicting and clashing programs has been preserved. Ecuador works under what is generally called a Leftist Government. Leftism in this case means anti-Jesuitism. Ecuador still lives in an era in which Masonry and Jesuitry constitute the only camps of opinion.

Peru suffered a year ago exactly the thing that Brazil experienced recently. The elections of 1936 were suspended, and General Oscar Benavides proclaimed an extension of his own term of office. The army intervened to guarantee the new order of things. There was no ideological question involved. It was the familiar coup, *manu militari*, through which so many Peruvian administrations have secured power. Bolivia, high up in the Andean fastnesses, has been the victim of military changes ever since the conclusion of the disastrous Chaco war. It would be trivial to speak of Fascism in this mountain Republic.

In Chile, President Alessandri rules from the Left. In Argentine, General Justo exercises a much more moderate dictatorship, while in little Uruguay, Dr. Gabriel Terra has achieved some notoriety by breaking diplomatically with the Soviet Union and denouncing Communist plots within his territory. During the brief presidency of Col. Rafael Franco in Paraguay, much was made of his "Fascism." His fall has left slight traces of such a program. In the Caribbean, in the Republic whose fortunes most interest the United States, a similar trend is occuring. Who will doubt that the growing power of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba is the prelude to a strong, personal government, quite in line with the tradition of that unhappy Republic? Fascism? Communism? Not at all: simply Batistism.

The Hispanic American world has of course been shaken by the spread of the conflicting ideologies abroad. It is to be expected that the various trends should manifest themselves on this side of the ocean. However, caution must be exerted to avoid a facile and thoroughly false classification, which is likely to prove unrealistic and unhistorical, and out of keeping with the evolution of these republics. We are reaching a point at which humanity is being browbeaten into two channels of thought, with the *via media* eliminated. There may come a time when the term Fascism will be projected backward and Napoleon, Alexander and Darius will be anathematized as apostles of the *fascio*.

THE DECENCY DRIVE AGAINST HARMFUL MAGAZINES

Fort Wayne's plan could be imitated everywhere

MOST REV. JOHN F. NOLL, D.D.

THE United States Post Office Department has a list of all the magazines to which it extends the second-class mail privilege, but there are many papers and periodicals whose publishers would not care to submit them for second-class mail consideration. These are sent by express or carried by truck from the point of publication to the remotest places in the United States. In the writer's home city of 130,000 people, there are two agencies which serve local magazine racks with about seven hundred weekly, fortnightly and quarterly periodicals, a large proportion of which are not only not fit to read, but are charged with mental poison.

It may surprise you to learn that most of the publications can be procured by the retailer only from these agencies, and can be procured by the one who wishes to read them only from the retailer. It may surprise you also to learn that the operator of newsstands and magazine racks is not at liberty to make his own selection of the magazine literature he would like to handle. He must take a job lot, the bad with the good, and if he should raise any objection to this arrangement, he is told that he may not even sell the metropolitan dailies, because their publishers, too, for the most part, have a contract with the general agency according to whose terms they have an exclusive right of local distribution.

Can nothing be done, you may ask, to correct this situation, most unjust both to the retailer and to the purchaser of magazine literature? Yes, the block-booking arrangement can be broken and the filthy literature kept out of the community if public opinion be sufficiently aroused and asserts itself concertedly against it.

About two months ago the Deanery Council of Catholic Women decided to clean up the magazine racks of South Bend, Indiana. They first of all called attention to the situation through the daily papers, both of which lent editorial encouragement. Having discovered that most of the filthy literature was sold in the vicinity of public schools they so apprized the Superintendent of the city schools, and he became interested. Then the Mayor joined the crusade, enlisting the services of the prosecuting attorney. Then the Ministerial Association got into the campaign. Then the C. Y. O. decided to visit every home in the twin cities of South Bend and Mishawaka and procure a signature of someone in the household to a pledge which provided that all patronage would be withheld from any place where lewd literature was handled or sold.

Of course, the sellers of magazine literature began at once to remove everything objectionable from their racks. A Catholic druggist sent a report on the campaign to the *Indiana Pharmacist;* in November last, this official druggist magazine urged the druggists of the State to clear themselves of any stigma which might attach to them and even asked them to cooperate with the public of South Bend toward a clean-up. The South Bend drive was also accorded three full pages in the official organ of the National Association of Retail Druggists for November under the Caption *South Bend Sweeps Out Smut Sheets.* In this national organ was reproduced a letter written by every South Bend pharmacist to the Agency. It reads as follows:

> Magazine Wholesaler:
>
> At a meeting between the officers of the South Bend Pharmacy Club and a Committee representing the South Bend Deanery of the National Council of Catholic Women we were asked to discontinue the sale and display of magazines and other periodicals that were offensive to public decency in either reading matter or advertising.
>
> Since you, as the distributor of these questionable publications, have always enjoyed my confidence to the extent of the make-up of my magazine order, I have the right to expect that you do not violate that confidence. Inasmuch as it is impossible for me to examine from cover to cover each and every magazine that is delivered to determine the nature of its contents, I shall expect that you deliver nothing that is offensive to public decency.
>
> Moreover, since the officers of our Association are responsible and are known as men of high repute in the community, I feel that in such matters as the present the South Bend Pharmacy Club be recognized to deal with.
>
> The South Bend Pharmacy Club's efforts in the present instance to remove any stigma from the profession of pharmacy meets with my approval and I ask that you deal with the officers of the Club.
>
> Please be advised that in the future I shall expect and demand that you refrain from delivering anything that is not acceptable to the moral standards of my customers.
>
> Yours truly,
> (Druggist's name.)

The United States Government permits the Post

Office lobby to be used by afflicted ex-service men, possibly rent free, for the sale of literature. The first place the South Bend women visited for the purchase of magazines was the Post Office lobby, where the rack was operated by a blind man. About six weeks later, when we decided to initiate a campaign against indecent literature in the city of Fort Wayne, we discovered that druggists and other sellers of magazine literature had received a scare and that they absolutely refused from the local agents the off-color magazines. The two agencies mitigated their policy and decided, at least temporarily, not to enforce the block-booking arrangement which had hitherto obtained. The consequence has been that the dirty literature has been returned to the publishers during the past two months.

Believing that a crusade against lewd literature should have even initial support from all organizations concerned with the moral welfare of the community, the writer called to his home representatives of the press, of the Ministerial Association, of the Y. M. C. A., of the Y. W. C. A., of the Public Schools, of the Parent-Teacher Association, of the Woman's Club, besides the heads of the United Holy Name Societies, the Knights of Columbus, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women—and to these he explained the seriousness of the threat to the morality of youth.

Every organization represented became intensely interested, pledged cooperation, and our decency drive has been publicized through the newspapers, through Catholic and Protestant pulpits, through the schools, so that at present no obscene literature is publicly exposed and it is doubtful if many parents would allow it to be brought into the homes.

But the question naturally arises on what basis, and according to what standards is the moral cleanness of literature to be judged. Here in Fort Wayne, we follow pretty much the standards established by the Legion of Decency in relation to motion pictures. We believe that literature should be considered in relation to its reading, to its pictorial contents and to its advertising, and that magazines should be black-listed according to the following standards: (1) those, which glorify crime and criminals; (2) those, whose contents are largely "sexy"; (3) those, whose illustrations and pictures border on the indecent; (4) those, which make a habit of carrying articles on illicit love; (5) those, which carry disreputable advertising.

There are numerous magazines published, principally for young people, whose stories, detective and otherwise, are not in themselves bad, but whose every advertisement is of the kind which would exclude them from any reputable newspaper or magazine. While the Fort Wayne Committee did not favor the publication of a blacklist for fear that it might only arouse the curiosity of the pornographic-minded, we did actually blacklist more than fifty. We have districted the whole city, and appointed Vigilance Committees to see that there will be permanency in the clean-up. Members of these committees will keep an eye on their own area.

In an editorial appearing in the *Editor and Publisher* (November 27), a very timely warning was directed not only to the publishers of literature unmistakenly lewd, but even to the editors of metropolitan newspapers who, seemingly impressed by the popularity of the many pictorial magazines, have abandoned their traditional restraint and are beginning to play up the nude. He warns them that the day is not far off when public resentment will make itself felt. The editor referred to writes:

> There has always been a market for pictorial bawdiness and pornography and there probably will always be, but it has generally been furtive and under cover. Now with the mad scramble of the picture magazines for circulations, involving the big ones as well as their nasty little satellites, the business of purveying pictorial salaciousness on a big scale has come into the open.
>
> We do not know the present number of picture magazines on the market, since no one seems to be keeping an hour-by-hour total, but the last half-dozen we have looked through reveal their editors tunnelling sweatily into the smut pile.
>
> A few newspapers, perhaps thinking there is a bonanza in this sort of thing, have recently printed picture features which are definitely out of place in publications going into the home.
>
> Two facts in the situation are plain to responsible publishers and editors:
>
> First, that national advertisers wouldn't be caught dead in ninety percent of these publications, as their lack of copy attests.
>
> Second, that a firm groundwork is being laid for insistent censorship demands. The printed material already is at hand which, if assembled, would impress any legislative group.

In Fort Wayne, the Committee decided not only to campaign against bad literature, but to campaign for the reading of good literature. This should stimulate a wider sale of Catholic papers and magazines and books.

THE SHADOW OF DAS KAPITAL

DAVID GOLDSTEIN

MANY persons must have read with interest the address on books that was delivered by the Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, at the *Times* Book Fair last month. The address covered a wide range of books in a manner that was impressive and instructive.

As would be expected, first place was given to the Bible. The declaration that "the fiery example therein of insurgent prophets shouting, 'Thus saith the Lord,' has caused many a man to battle for social justice with superhuman strength," was striking and timely. This shibboleth might well emblazon the banner of a Catholic Front.

In dealing with *Das Kapital,* Secretary Wallace expressed the well-established belief that its formation in the mind of Karl Marx was due to the "forces which Darwin, Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill let loose in the biological and economic worlds, combined with those originated by Hegel in the philosophic world." Thus far, we may rightly go with Secretary Wallace when dealing with *Das Kapital,* but no further. The likelihood is that this

economic treatise was in the mind of Secretary Wallace when he said: "A number of these books I have not read. I have only read about them." This accounts, perhaps, for the positive declaration that: "Whether we like it or not, every one in the world today is different because of *Das Kapital.* Without *Das Kapital* there would have been neither the Communist nor the Fascist experiments. More than any other book of the nineteenth century, all of us today are living under the shadow of *Das Kapital.*"

The "shadow" we are living under, that is turning a growing number of persons from democracy to a choice between Communism and Fascism, can be attributed to *Das Kapital* only by persons who have not read this much named book, which the late Socialist Congressman, Victor Berger, years ago declared all Socialists brag about whereas not more than one in a thousand has read it. It was this brag on the part of Socialists that caused the late Mrs. Martha Moore Avery and the writer, while in the Socialist movement, to organize the Karl Marx Class of Boston. We were amazed, time and again, to hear our "comrades" making claims about what Marx said in *Das Kapital,* and calling upon the people to read the book when in those days, like today, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand Socialists could not explain the first three chapters of that intricate book.

Das Kapital is a serious attempt scientifically to present laws that govern the production and exchange of commodities, laws held to be as little dependent upon the will of man as are the laws of nature. It is an analysis of commodities, a theory of the source of economic value embodied in commodities. Therein is outlined by Marx, in minute detail, with algebraic formulae, the process that causes certain commodities to become the "universal equivalent," money; the conversion of money into "constant capital" (machinery, materials, etc.), and variable capital (labor power); and the creation, appropriation and accumulation of surplus value. *Das Kapital* is a cataclysmic theory, proclaimed by Socialist doctrinaires in the days before the red flag with its sickle and hammer was raised on the Kremlin. It purports to prove scientifically the inevitability of economic class struggles that are as certain to climax in the "expropriation of the expropriators" as Darwin's theory of natural selection demonstrated that the troglodyte, after ages of struggle, was transformed into a man.

In *Das Kapital,* Marx analyzes our present economic society and not Socialism; in fact, Socialism and Communism are not dealt with in the book. Yet the father of modern Socialism outlines therein a theory of inevitable centralization of capital into the hands of fewer and fewer persons through the industrialization and mechanization of the processes of production and their use to extract from labor power "variable capital," or an ever-increasing amount of surplus value. On the other hand, it holds that complete pauperization of the proletariat is certain to come, and to force the confiscation of the capital which will then become collective property.

The theory in *Das Kapital* called for the coming of collective ownership of the means of production and exchange (Socialism) in an industrially centralized and mechanized country. But "Socialism realized" (as Stalin calls the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics) came in an agricultural country where the implements of farming were largely of a primitive character. Thus, into the museum of inanities went the cock-sure conclusion of Marx in *Das Kapital,* along with the Darwinian theory of "natural selection," upon being discovered that it did not select. That is why *Das Kapital* has been rarely boasted about in Socialist books during the past decade.

If the world were flooded with *Das Kapital,* or books of the same character, very likely there would not have been a Socialist-Communist movement with its "shadow" that is encompassing us like a pall. If such an affliction is to be attributed to any book, it is the *Communist Manifesto,* which Secretary Wallace may not have noticed in the *Times* Book Exhibit, where a copy of the first American edition is on display.

The vital impetus to Socialism came when the commission was given to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels by the Congress of the Communist League (London, England, 1847) "to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical program." This brought forth the fiery, clever, disruptive, revolutionary *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* in 1848, over two decades before *Das Kapital* of Marx was published. This Socialist *Credo,* Marxians rightly declare to be "the basis on which modern Socialism has built its world-wide structure." If it were not for the *Communist Manifesto, Das Kapital* would be on the bookshelves alongside of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations,* to be casually glanced at by students, but rarely to be mentioned.

The *Communist Manifesto* is the clarion call for an attack upon private property, the family, the state, morality and religion, which it dubs "bourgeois." It is the *Communist Manifesto* that taught Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Tim Buck, Browder and other Communist leaders to declare for peace while they instil into the minds and hearts of the "proletariat" the belief that "their end can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Therein Socialists learned to muddy the intellectual waters, how to shift from one tactic to another tactic in their never-say-die attempt to overthrow existing institutions, how to attack by innuendo, how to play the Socialist legerdemain of "now-you-see-it-and-now-you-don't" in discussion.

It is the *Communist Manifesto* that gave Socialism its rallying cry . . . "workingmen of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains and a world to win" . . . that is heard throughout the world today despite the fact that more chains bind the workers in the land of "Socialism realized" than in "capitalist countries." It is the *Communist Manifesto* that warrants the application of Socialism to be called Communism in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. A proper knowledge of the place from which the "shadow" comes that is darkening the paths of lovers of God and country will aid us in dispelling its encircling gloom.

WITH SCRIP AND STAFF

THE LAYMAN'S GREAT ACTION

ON the Christmas altar, Christ Our Lord is sacramentally reborn. This is our real Christmas: the Christ Mass, the center and the substance of all our festivities.

With the rebirth of Christ, the Church is, as it were, reborn. A new cycle begins in the calendar; a new battle begins for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon earth. For the Child that is born is not only King Peaceful, *Rex Pacificus,* foretold by David, but He is also God the Mighty, who has overcome the sceptre of the oppressor.

The Christ Child's Vicar on earth has sounded a warning for the fight. In his allocution of December 13 he begged God "in His infinite clemency" to "save His Church and human society from the terrible storms threatening them." The scudding spindrift before this storm is the bitterness of millions over the maldistributed goods of God's earth. The silent core of the storm is the spiritual vacuum caused when the soul is stripped bare of God and religion. Its tempest is the terrible social and political pressure which sweeps away human liberty, Faith and morals in a rage against the Eternal.

In all his letters, the Pope has made this plain: that he relies in especial manner, at the present time, upon the action of the Catholic laity.

"Power of organization": the kind you hear about when the Governor or the Mayor has too pressing an engagement to attend the Catholic convention, and sends a Baptist politician and gladhander to tell you how much he admires "the wonderful organization of the great Catholic Church"? Generals and general staff; secretaries and executive committees and coordinating committees and national conferences? No; not the power of an organization, but the power of a priestly mission conferred upon the Catholic layman through the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Says the Pope in his last year's letter to the Bishops of Mexico: "We recommend that you make use of these secular people to whom, as living stones of the Holy House of God, Saint Peter attributes a profound dignity which makes them in a certain manner participants in a holy and regal priesthood." By virtue of their share in the holy priesthood, they possess also a share in the priestly work of teaching, announcing and defending the Faith, of bringing souls back to God, of healing and rebuilding society. Their office has its positive limits and conditions, but it is tremendous none the less.

We cannot meet the evils that threaten us in this country unless Catholic laymen exert their priestly office. They cannot exert it unless they understand it. And they can not understand it unless they are thoroughly instructed therein. Hence the need of sermons, of adult education, of round tables and study clubs; above all, of retreats, wherein the layman will learn the real meaning of the dignity that he enjoys, and the responsibility that that dignity carries with it.

But a share in the active apostolate is based upon a share in something much deeper and more essential: a share in Christ's priestly Act itself.

This Act of our High Priest is forever renewed in the Sacrifice of the Mass. The laity share in this Act by their participation in the Sacrifice.

So it follows that the extent to which the laity are fully to *live* their priestly dignity, the extent to which it is for them a living reality and not a mere name or title, depends upon the perfection with which they are actually participants in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and not mere witnesses or persons "hearing" Mass.

There are, as it were, three modes of this participation.

The first mode is absolutely essential. Without it all else is meaningless and a mere rite. This is that we unite ourselves *interiorly* to the Sacrifice, entering into the Mind of the High Priest and offering the Mass inwardly with Him. Without this interior union all else is but empty formalism.

The second mode is that we take part *outwardly* in the Mass, by some external, physical actions, such as either taking part in the ceremonies, as do the Mass servers, or by joining audibly in the prayers of the priest, or by some form of liturgical chant (not just by singing hymns at Mass).

The third mode is closely related to the preceding, and is a communal participation, in which we take part in the Holy Sacrifice not as isolated individuals, but as a body, a congregation, as in the parish Mass.

I believe that the Catholic laity of this country will never understand, much less exercise, that priestly office which the Holy Father expects of them until we have made it possible for all of them, young and old, learned and unlearned without exception, constantly to take part in the Holy Mass first of all interiorly—with a clear understanding and fortified by adequate liturgical and doctrinal instruction—then likewise exteriorly and communally, through the chant or other forms of external participation. It is in such participation that the Catholic laity formally, specifically, unite themselves to their Divine Head. It is this, and this alone, which will fully make, in the Pope's words, "every Christian conscious of his dignity and his responsibility as a son of the Church and a member of the Mystical Body of Christ"; and thus, as the Pope also points out, his responsibility to all the other members of that Body.

Would that this Christmas, and every Christmas, meant the rebirth among us of such a real *Christ Mass*!

JOHN LAFARGE

THE CLOUDED EAST

RECENT events in the Far East affecting the United States invest the Allocution which the Holy Father delivered on December 13 with unusual interest. It may be assumed that the attack by Japanese airplanes which ended in the sinking of an American gun-boat will be fully investigated, that responsibility will be placed where it belongs, and measures taken to prevent a recurrence of these hostile expeditions. More the United States cannot ask. With less, it cannot be satisfied.

Unfortunately, the control of the Japanese armed forces by the Japanese civilian Government seems to be slight and remote. Hence, while an apology may satisfy the demands of diplomatic relations, it affords no safeguard against a repetition of the offense. It is difficult to enter into the complexities of the official Oriental mind, and never more difficult than when an attempt is made to fathom the true meaning of Oriental diplomatic communications. If the Japanese Government can pledge itself to pacific courses, while the army and navy of Japan acknowledge no control except that imposed by their officers, an exchange of diplomatic messages has no meaning.

Probably much of the damage that has been inflicted in the Eastern war zone is attributable to armed forces whose officers either are unable to keep them in hand, or do not care to restrain them. In the Allocution of December 13, the Holy Father singles out no group for blame, but deplores the great losses that have been sustained "by heralds of the Gospel and flourishing Christian communities." Worse losses may be anticipated, adds the Pontiff, "because of the upheavals which are the natural concomitant of armed conflict." In some localities whole towns have been destroyed, and the surviving inhabitants driven out to wander over the country until they drop from hunger. Many sections are ravaged by disease, and in all the occupied zones, the mortality from natural causes shows, especially among children, an alarming increase.

The prospect that hostilities may be suspended seems remote, even though of late Great Britain and France have been exhibiting serious concern over the loss of life and destruction of property suffered by their nationals in China. A forceful remonstrance, especially if supported by the United States, might be effective, and would ordinarily be forthcoming. But if the separation of the military from the civil power in Japan is a fact, as some think it is, diplomatic notes are useless.

The old year closes with the war clouds hanging over the Far East. "Faced by these events which greatly afflict Us," said the Holy Father, "we turn in trustful prayer to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation." All Christians will join with the prayer of the Holy Father. Not only in the Far East, but throughout Europe, agents of evil are at work and their aim is universal war. May the Prince of Peace confound their counsels, and give us peace in this our day.

CHRISTMAS DAY

WAS it not Dickens who said that if we could make every day Christmas Day the world would be a brighter and happier and holier place for every child of God? Suppose Christmas came every month! But why not make every day a renewal of the spirit of love and peace which even the hardest of us feel on Christmas Day? Christ was born but once at Bethlehem, but through His grace He can be born daily in the heart that loves. For all our friends, and especially for all our enemies, if we have any, we ask from the Divine Child a Christmas spirit not for a day but for a lifetime.

SALT OF THE

THIS is the hallowed season when we think of children with particular love. They remind us that the Son of God was once a little child. Ours is an unbelieving world, but some saving memory of the adorable mystery of the Incarnation makes a world that is faithless dedicate Christmas to all little children.

Turning from this sweet and altogether wholesome sentiment to statistics, our spirits droop. For the vital statistics furnished by our industrious bureaus do not supply a cheering prospect. A world without little children everywhere would be a world without light and cheer and happiness, a dying world, a world in which there is no hope.

But Dr. Louis I. Dublin gives us facts from which we learn that we are moving toward that bleak world. Some sixty years ago, the birth-rate in the United States was thirty-seven per 1,000 of population. By 1935, the rate had dropped to sixteen. Let this decline be maintained, and within a few decades the United States will be a country peopled chiefly by old men and women.

Old age, they say, brings wisdom. It does, but only when it is a hallowed old age. We can hardly think of the survivors of a race that has all but destroyed itself as "hallowed." These old people will live in a world that has been made sterile by selfishness.

Is there reason to suppose that the decline in the birth-rate will be checked? The answer must be in the negative. The birth-rate is not dropping because a majority of those who

ORIALS

THE FIRST LAW

AT Bethlehem we find the lesson that the world needs and will not learn. It is the lesson of love. We call for justice in our indignation, but what man living would be content to have his life adjudged by justice alone? What we need, and what we find in the Incarnation, is Infinite Love. The deepest law of life, the law without which all laws fall and are as naught, is the law of love of God and of all men for His sake. Were love observed as life's fundamental law, there would be no national or economic wars, but all men would live in peace and harmony in a world of happiness.

OF THE EARTH

marry are primarily concerned with the physical and mental improvement of the race. The lowered birth-rate cannot be attributed to an anxious care that no child shall be born, unless opportunities for his proper development can be insured. The concern of childless couples who are childless by their own desire, through frustration of natural powers entrusted to them by their Creator, is not for the welfare of possible children. It is for what they conceive to be their own welfare.

Unfortunately, this concern is approved by the current public opinion. It has the approbation of civic and religious societies. Within recent years, it has been greatly stimulated by propaganda issued by commercial companies with financial interests at stake. The Catholic Church alone sets her face against this unnatural practice which would raise selfishness and uncontrolled passion to the rank of a public as well as a private virtue. She knows that seeking self at the expense of duty cannot make virtuous men and women, upright citizens, faithful to every obligation, or a country strong enough to live.

Children are the salt of the earth, for they make us unselfish. Parents are always thinking about them, planning for them, protecting them, and this pre-occupation is a love that purifies and hallows. The rest of us who are not parents feel that a child is something to be protected, even at the cost of life itself. Only a world that listens gladly to the music of childrens' voices can be wholesome and holy.

HORSE AND BUGGY WISDOM

THERE are no weasel words in the vocabulary of the Hon. Alfred E. Smith. As a Byzantine logothete, to recall a phrase which the late President Roosevelt once applied to the late President Wilson, he is an abject failure. Governor Smith has ideas, and he cherishes principles, and he expresses them in words that the humblest can understand. Unfortunately, he often expresses them to an audience that will not listen, and probably could not understand if it did.

Addressing a group of insurance administrators in New York some weeks ago, men whose income depends upon stable social and economic conditions, Governor Smith essayed to answer the question: "What's the matter with this country?" In his opinion, two things were the matter, and the first was "the complete lack of interest on the part of the ordinary citizen in the operation of his Government." It seems to us that the Governor might have concluded his address at this point, for the fault he stressed is fundamental. If it can be corrected, we shall have a Government under constitutional safeguards. If it cannot be corrected, nothing else matters much.

Governor Smith's words bring us back to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The delegates knew what they wanted to do; as to the ultimate goal they had no differences of opinion. Dissension arose only as to the choice of means to an end, and in the debates that followed a plan of government was forged. But it was a government which demanded cooperation on part of every citizen, for it was a government of citizens by citizens, not of underlings regimented by bureaucrats. "Well, Doctor," asked a lady as Franklin left the convention hall, "what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?" "A republic," replied Franklin, and he added: "if you can keep it."

We certainly cannot "keep it" if as a people we are content to entrust with careless confidence the affairs of government to a parcel of bureaucrats, swollen with vanity and ruling with insolence. "No free government, or the blessing of liberty, can be preserved to any people," wrote Mason in the Virginia Bill of Rights, "but by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." One of those principles is that this Government cannot be held to constitutional standards and limitations unless its citizens guard it vigilantly, and steadfastly oppose encroachment upon their rights.

Governor Smith's second criticism is closely connected with his first. He finds that "the people don't know who are paying taxes. They think the rich pay them. They don't know they are paying them. They hear about 'soak the rich,' 'share the wealth,' capital-gains taxes, and undivided-surplus taxes, and they don't know that these things are passed on to them, to be paid for in everything they buy." Here Governor Smith touches upon a campaign which this Review has waged for many years. The right of the Government to lay just taxes, and the duty of the citizen to pay them, are unquestioned.

But in this country, the theory is that we ourselves decided, through Congress, what taxes we shall pay.

Practically, however, not only the particular tax, but its amount, is fixed by the money which Congress spends, and which we through our inertia allow Congress to spend. As this Review has repeatedly observed, were every bill carrying an appropriation to be tagged: "This measure will take so many dollars out of your pocket-book" the obligation of supplying the billions which Congress appropriates "with the prodigality of a spendthrift," to quote Senator Glass, would not be laid upon the people. For paid it must be, and by the people, or it will not be paid. The Government has no other source of income. When it wishes money, it orders us to bring up our pocket-books, and from them it extracts the amount authorized by Congress. And most of the pocket-books are limp and lean, for the chief burden of taxation falls upon the poor.

Governor Smith will probably be told that his doctrine belongs to the horse-and-buggy age. The charge is true. Back in the days when this Republic was in course of formation, and in the first years of its operation, the doctrine was familiar. Our people understood that without them the Government could not function, and they aided it. They knew that taxes were paid by themselves, and they kept taxes down. They were a happier and freer people than we who live in an age in which the successor of the horse and buggy annually kills more than one hundred thousand Americans.

TAXING SMALL INCOMES

ACCORDING to press dispatches, changes in the Social Security Act will be asked by the two labor organizations headed, respectively, by William Green and John L. Lewis. In the opinion of these officials, the benefits of the Act are too restricted. Hence they will ask Congress to give unemployment-insurance benefits to workers engaged in legitimate strikes, to raise the minimum old-age pension from $10 per month to $30, and to extend both the old-age pension and the unemployment benefits to all workers.

At present, as may not be generally understood, domestic, marine and farm labor is excluded from the old-age pension scheme, while employes in small shops, marine and farm workers are not covered by unemployment insurance. The amendments suggested stress the faults in the Act pointed out by this Review when the plan was first brought before Congress.

Hardly less important than these amendments is the suggestion that employes be not required to contribute to unemployment-insurance funds. But if this suggestion has any value, it should be extended to include employe contributions to the old-age pension funds.

In our judgment the whole Act should be rewritten and placed on a sound financial basis. Its purposes, as need hardly be said, are good. But as it stands it is, primarily, a scheme to tax all small incomes.

THE KING COMES

CENTURIES ago the Psalmist envisioned the coming of the Saviour of Israel. "The Lord hath said to me: thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee." In their day, the Prophets also, sent to instruct and to console the people of Israel wrote of His coming. "A child is born unto us, and a son is given to us; whose government is upon his shoulder," wrote Isaias. "A light shall shine upon us this day: for our Lord is born unto us; and he shall be called Wonderful, God, the prince of peace, the father of the world to come; of whose reign there shall be no end."

These words the Church recalls to us in the second and third Masses on Christmas Day. It is as though she wished us to live for a moment with the peoples of old who yearned for His coming, who prayed and waited in silence and died before the counsels of the Omnipotent were fulfilled. Then turning to the Holy Gospels, she reads to us, first, the story of the birth of the Divine Child as recorded by Saint Luke, then the coming of the shepherds to adore the Infant, and in the third Mass Saint John's magnificent proclamation of the Word made flesh. For the Lessons she draws from the second and third chapters of Saint Paul's Epistle to Titus, and from the Apostle's Epistle to the Hebrews. The entire Liturgy of the day is replete, as is fitting, with references to the Divine Child taken from the Old and the New Testaments.

Varied as is this wonderfully beautiful Liturgy, its lesson is extremely simple. The gates of Heaven had been closed against man by the sin of Adam, and all the world lay in darkness. The people whom God had chosen, whether held under an oppressive foreign yoke or establishing their own rule in the Promised Land, were never at rest. They sinned and they repented, they wavered and again cleaved fast to God's law, strengthened and sustained by the ancient promise of a Saviour. God need not have promised this great boon, but He promised because He loved them. As Saint John teaches, it is to the love of God for man that we owe Jesus Our Saviour. Love, then, Divine Love, Infinite Love, is the simple lesson of the Liturgy on Christmas Day.

But in our meditations before the manger of the Christ Child let us not forget that His love invites our love in return. "Dearly beloved," writes Saint Paul, in the Lesson read at the second Mass, "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared." God is not manifested to us in the thunders of Sinai, but in the sweet and adorable presence of a Babe in His Mother's arms, One Whom we can see, and reverently touch, and lovingly adore. But love of the Divine Child means that we must have in our hearts love for all His brothers and sisters. When we fail in love for them we fail in love for Him, since the test of love for God is love for man.

Would that we could keep this Christmas spirit in our hearts every day of our lives! Then, indeed, should we draw many to Him and with them live in a world of peace, made happy by love of man for God, and love of men for one another.

CHRONICLE

AT HOME. Pope Pius XI appointed the Most Reverend Thomas H. McLaughlin, Bishop of Paterson, N. J.; the Most Reverend Bartholomew J. Eustace, Bishop of Camden, N. J.; the Most Reverend Francis R. Cotton, Bishop of Owensboro, Ky. They will be the first Bishops of these newly created dioceses. . . . The National Maritime Union voted to affiliate with the C. I. O. . . . General Motors head, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., endowed his foundation for economic research with $10,000,000. . . . Moscow trials in August, 1936, and January, 1937, hurled many charges at Leon Trotsky. Dr. John Dewey of New York, heading a commission, "tried" Trotsky, found him "not guilty." Over the radio, Dr. Dewey warned Americans of Soviet tactics. . . . The C. I. O. laid off 200 organizers because of the business recession. . . . Father Coughlin announced he would return to the air after January 1. . . . Alf M. Landon decared he would not seek or accept the nomination for President in 1940. . . . An increasing lack of discipline on American ships was reported from various sources. People are beginning to feel it is not safe to ride on an American ship, Senator Vandenberg declared. Communist elements among American Merchant Marine crews were blamed.

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WASHINGTON. The Supreme Court, six to three, decided the Treasury has the right to call gold-clause Liberty Loan bonds for redemption and not pay interest to their original maturity date. The decision, important in the New Deal's dollar-devaluation program, will save the Government more than $1,000,000,000 in interest. Justice McReynolds, speaking for the minority, denounced the verdict as violating the Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." . . . Puerto Rico recently passed laws providing for government birth-control clinics. The United States Attorney General has been asked whether the laws conflict with Federal statutes. . . . $41,-100,000 in Federal funds were checked off for ten cities for housing purposes, by Nathan Straus, United States Housing Authority Administrator . . . New coal prices fixed by the Bituminous Commission would cost them $21,000,000 more a year, railroads claimed, asking postponement of the order.

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THE ADMINISTRATION. The President revealed he was opposed to Government ownership of the railroads, except as a last resort. . . . Secretary Hull announced a peaceful settlement of the Honduras-Nicaragua boundary dispute. . . . Jerome N. Frank and John Wesley Hanes were named by the President as members of the Securities and Exchange Commission. . . . 350,000 additional workers will be put on WPA projects to take care of increasing relief needs, Harry L. Hopkins announced. . . . Great Britain wrote to say she would again default on her war-debt installment. . . . France also sent a letter to advise there would be no money forthcoming on her debt. . . . Hungary made a partial instalment payment on her debt. . . . Joseph P. Kennedy, chairman of the Maritime Commission, was favored by Mr. Roosevelt as Ambassador to Great Britain, succeeding Robert W. Bingham. . . . Regarding the sinking of the United States gunboat *Panay* and Standard Oil steamers by Japanese airmen, Mr. Roosevelt requested the Japanese Ambassador to inform Emperor Hirohito directly how "shocked and concerned" the President was over the "indiscriminate bombing of American . . . vessels on the Yangtze." Secretary Hull forwarded a stern note of protest to Japan, demanding a formal expression of regret, complete indemnification, assurance that similar incidents will not again occur. Japan apologized profusely, agreed to everything requested by Mr. Hull. As later reports came in, appearing to show that the Japanese attack was deliberate, an even graver view of the situation was taken in Washington. . . . Secretary Hull demanded that the Bolshevik Government find two Americans, Donald L. Robinson and his wife, who had disappeared in Moscow. Later, the Washington State Department discovered that the couple had secured false passports, using the names of children dead years ago.

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THE CONGRESS. Vermont's Governor Aiken appeared before the House Rivers and Harbors Committee, revealed his opposition to the Administration program for seven Federal regional planning agencies similar to the TVA. The scheme will encroach on State sovereignty, the Governor felt. "The destruction of a balance of power between the States and the National Government is not a good thing for America," he declared. . . . The House passed its Farm Bill, 267 to 130. Under the measure, the Administration is empowered to decide how much acreage may be alloted to the various crops. . . . An attempt to hold down costs on the Senate Farm Bill to $500,000,000 a year was rejected. Undemocratic regimentation was seen in the Bill by its opponents. "We are abandoning the democracy," Senator King believed. . . . With more than sixty amendments pinned to it, the House version of the Wages and Hours Bill was the subject of acrimonious debate. The A. F. of L. substitute for the measure—a forty-hour week at forty cents an hour—was thrown out by the House. . . . 218 Representatives signed a petition. As a result, the Ludlow constitutional amendment requiring a national referendum before Congress can declare war will appear on the floor for consideration, January 10. . . . A group of Senators drew up a ten-point program, under which the Congress would independently ac-

celerate economic recovery and emphasize its function as the law-making body of the Government. One of the ten points declares: "We propose to preserve and rely upon the American system of private enterprise and initiative and our American form of government."

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JAPAN-CHINA. December 13, on the Yangtze River twenty-five miles above Nanking, Japanese air fleets bombed and sank the United States gunboat *Panay,* two Standard Oil ships, damaged a third Standard Oil vessel. The English gunboat *Ladybird* and other ships were shelled. . . . The *Panay* had been standing by Nanking to take off Americans. When the fighting around the capital became extremely dangerous for her, she moved up river. Survivors declared the Japanese airmen flew so low they could not have failed to see the American flags painted all over the *Panay.* They were inclined to believe the attack was deliberate. Rumors spread that Japanese airmen were not obeying orders. As a result of the attack on the *Panay* and the oil ships, three were dead, fourteen seriously injured, many still unaccounted for. . . . Announcement came from Shanghai that Rear Admiral Mitsuzawa, head of the Japanese naval air force in China, was dismissed from his post, returned to Japan. . . . Japanese in the streets of Tokyo told Americans of their sorrow over the incident. . . . Chinese were still fighting desperately in some parts of Nanking, but the Nipponese soldiers were mopping up most of the city. . . . Japan was setting up a puppet Chinese Republic in Peiping (now changed back to Peking).

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SPAIN. Generalissimo Francisco Franco set off three offensives simultaneously on the Teruel, Toledo and Brunete sectors. . . . In a spectacular air battle near Saragossa, 270 warplanes fought it out in the sky. Twenty-five Red planes, one Nationalist, were shot down. . . . Snow, rain, sleet, freezing weather made offensive action difficult. . . . The Leftist Spanish Government protested to Britain because the London Government warned British shipping following General Franco's announcement of a Nationalist blockade of the Spanish coasts. . . . During the siege of the Alcazar, Teresa Gonzalez made horse-meat stews for the Nationalist doughboys. Declaring that she refused "to abandon her post despite the terrible shelling and the many casualties" the Franco Government awarded her the Spanish Cross of Military Merit.

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GREAT BRITAIN. British warships and merchant vessels were fired on by Japanese in the Yangtze River. London forwarded an icy protest to Tokyo, stating the attacks were deliberate. In reply, Tokyo followed the previous formula—expression of regret, promise of compensation, assurance it will not happen again. . . . Britain's hope that the United States fleet might be used to take care of British interests in the Far East grew dimmer. . . . The Duchess of Windsor was placed last of all Duchesses in the new edition of Burke's Peerage. Her husband is third among the Dukes. . . . Clement R. Attlee, salaried leader of the Opposition in Parliament, went to Leftist Spain, gave the clenched fist salute, encouragement to the Reds. A "Major Attlee" battalion was formed in the Red Army. An attempt was made to censure Attlee on the ground he was a quasi-official figure. The attempt failed.

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ITALY. Premier Mussolini announced December 11 that Italy was resigning from the League of Nations. "We are leaving without any regrets," he said, "the tottering temple where they are not working for peace but are paving the way for war." . . . Germany departed from the League in 1933. Japan withdrew that same year. Following Italy's withdrawal, Germany will henceforth not use the words: "League of Nations." It will call the League "the Geneva entente."

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GERMANY. Church Minister Hanns Kerrl declared there are two religions in Germany, the Christian and the new national pagan faith. A movement to confiscate Church property was advocated by the Hitler Elite Guard. . . . The chief Protestant charitable organization was forbidden by the Ministry of the Interior to make its annual house-to-house campaign for funds. Storm troops commenced their annual Christmas ceremonies. All references to Christ were avoided. Reverence for the "Winter Solstice" was inculcated. One leader declared the idea of Christmas was borrowed from the early Germans. Authority over Protestant churches was given to Dr. Friedrich Werner by Church Minister Kerrl. Dr. Werner is an attorney. . . . A Protestant pastor, Adolf Weinel, was jailed for three months because he said Dr. Goebbels had been educated free by a Catholic school.

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FOOTNOTES. Speaking at the consistory wherein he created five Cardinals, Pope Pius expressed sorrow over the damage to missions in the Far East occasioned by the war. He grieved over the "impious and atrocious things being perpetrated in Russia and those being prepared to the danger of Christian life in Germany," and inveighed against leaders who "push their temerity so far as to rebel against the Divine Majesty itself." The reference here was believed to be to Hitler and Stalin. . . . French experience with the forty-hour week appeared to be rather unsatisfactory. Production has dropped. Adjustments in the forty-hour week are being considered by the Paris Government. French Foreign Minister Yvon Delbos visited Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, striving to strengthen French influence in central Europe. . . . A mock election, in which voters had but one ticket to vote for, was held in Russia. The full weight of the Bolshevik dictatorship was directed to getting out the vote, in order to persuade world opinion that the people were solidly supporting the Moscow tyranny.

CORRESPONDENCE

ANCIENT DEPLOYMENT

EDITOR: In reading through Milton's *Paradise Lost* recently I was struck by the very pointed application of these words of his to the present world-wide tactics of our brothers of the United Front. From these words of the enemy of our salvation, just before the decisive battle between the good angels and the bad, we can readily conclude that the devil has not changed his plan of campaign much since then.

> At interview both stood
> A while, but suddenly at head appeared
> Satan: And thus was heard commanding loud.
> Vanguard, to right and left the front unfould;
> That all may see who hate us, how we seek
> Peace and composure, and with open brest
> Stand ready to receive them, if they like
> Our overture, and turn not back perverse. . . .

I thought that this forceful reminder to us that we are only fighting one phase of the eternal combat against the Deceiver might be of interest to your readers.

Wernersville, Pa. E. S. D.

CATHOLIC EXILES

EDITOR: Being a Catholic refugee, I appreciate very much the publicity you give to the Godless campaign in Germany. Our suffering brothers of my country certainly need the prayers which are offered for them.

May I ask you a great favor? Please do not forget those who were or will be obliged to leave Germany because they are true and faithful Catholics. Do try to make your readers understand what they can do about the persecution.

The immigrants do not only want opportunity of some kind to make their living—though it is difficult enough to find work for them; they need more than sympathy. They have a hard and stormy way to go in order to get accustomed to another language, the new surroundings, maybe even another kind of work, especially if they are above a certain age. Do help them to regain their belief in humanity. Then they will be reliable citizens in the United States, as they were in the old country.

Great Neck, N. Y. GABRIEL ALEXANDER

PIONEER CHAPLAIN

EDITOR: It is comforting to think of a man who in the span of life saw the fruition of his efforts and undoubtedly is now enjoying his eternal reward. Reference is made to Father H. C. Hengell, chaplain emeritus of St. Paul's chapel at the University of Wisconsin, whose death occurred recently.

Early in the present century the State of Wisconsin spent considerable sums making its university an educational institution which came to be ranked with the old aristocrats of American culture and scholarship, but was secular to the *nth* degree. During these same years there came in ever-increasing numbers the sons and daughters of the German and Irish settlers of the Commonwealth.

This tendency of Catholic students to seek their higher education in a secular and tax-supported institution caused concern in certain quarters. A solution in the form of an antidote was offered by the students themselves led by one of their number, a young priest, then enrolled in the graduate school and serving as assistant pastor at a local church. A petition was addressed to Archbishop Messmer asking that a chapel be established for Catholic students in Madison. The prelate acceded to the request and appointed Father Hengell chaplain.

Only the Recording Angel will be able to weigh accurately the spiritual results of the founding of St. Paul's so close to the acknowledged province of materialism, exact science and of philosophy quite different from Thomism. However, Father Hengell saw certain happenings which undoubtedly deserve the title of tangible results. He saw Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen lecture from a University of Wisconsin platform. He saw Father J. A. Ryan present a course in the school's economics department. He saw his Newman Club become the largest student organization on the campus.

When death overtook this pioneer chaplain in his sixtieth year, the church press outside of Wisconsin had little to say, although his career represented Catholic Action in its most vital and difficult form.

Milwaukee, Wis. THERESA LITTLE

PIFFLING PREACHING

EDITOR: You write about "the weariness of our editorial duties." I offer a humble suggestion.

Why don't you lighten this weariness by permitting our Lord and His inspired writers to do some of the work for you? Why not publish editorials by the Master, Jesus Christ our King?

The plain, unembellished text of the New Testament is chuckful of pertinent editorial comment on the burning questions of our day and generation, infinitely better than any *humanae sapientiae verba*. All you'd have to do is to select and copy it.

Such editorials would have all the thrill and sensationalism of absolute novelty for the majority of your readers, including a goodly number of us clergymen whose neglect of the sacred pages is the reason for the piffling preaching heard in most churches.

Cincinnati, Ohio. C. P.

LITERATURE AND ARTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO MICHAEL BURT

LEONARD FEENEY, S.J.

THROUGH the kindness of a very dear lady with snow-white hair I became acquainted with Michael Burt. I might have called her an *old* lady, but Michelangelo says one shouldn't on the score that innocence never grows old. This nice lady received from a priest friend of hers in Ireland one of Michael Burt's pamphlets. Pamphlet is too big a name for it. It is no more than a single sheet folded. It bears no publisher's inscription, no indication of having originated in a book or a magazine; it carries no copyright and makes no claims to rights reserved. It is simply called: *More Litterae Scriptae* by Michael Burt, presumably one of many little literary delectables distributed by the kind author for the amusement of his friends.

It is possible to know the quality of a splendid bird by one feather dropped from its plumage. It is this way with Michael Burt. One senses in his slightest performance the abundance of wit and idea at his command. For Michael Burt is a consummate artist. Working in the smallest possible medium he achieves imperishable results. What novelist could ever fix so sharply the complete character of Georgetta Smugge in two letters; or account for the whole of Chaplain O'Shaughnessy in a telegram? The juxtaposition of these two, Lady Smugge and Father O'Shaughnessy, is a masterpiece of dramatic device bringing to the fore the full force of his stolid, adamantine charity, and her dazzling, lovable asininity. Not only that, but we are given a perfect etching of the character of the overwhelming A. Karpett-Knight (Major). A Vicar General and an indefinite Stacey Smugge occur in the proper proportions. Even Sir Ephraim and the Pope play effective roles in the piece, the one in the form of "a fez" and the other in the form of "an ear."

But I shall not impede Michael Burt's Sketch with any more preamble. Other than to say that I hope my introduction of him to an American audience will be at least remotely the cause of his being brought into the full light of the fame which he deserves, possibly even of being undisguised of a pseudonymity. Here's Michael Burt—and you're going to enjoy him!

I.

Sir Ephraim and Lady Smugge
request the pleasure of the Company of
The Reverend Seamus O'Shaughnessy
at Dinner on Friday, the 24th December, at 7.30

Fancy Dress.

Government House
Chutnipur
12th December.

R. S. V. P. to
The Private Secretary
to H. E. the Governor.

II.

The Reverend Seamus O'Shaughnessy is greatly honoured by the kind invitation of His Excellency the Governor and Lady Smugge to dinner on Friday, the 24th December, and deeply regrets that he is unable to accept.

The Presbytery.
Chutnipur

13th December

III.

Private

Government House
Chutnipur
14th December

Dear Father O'Shaughnessy,

I hope you will forgive the liberty I take in writing to you, but I feel it only right to point out that you have taken a somewhat unprecedented step in declining their Excellencies' invitation to dinner on the 24th, without giving any kind of reason. Perhaps you will allow one who is presumably better acquainted than yourself with Lady Smugge to suggest that, if through some totally unavoidable engagement you are really unable to attend, you might perhaps care to amplify your refusal accordingly, before I submit it to her Excellency.

Believe me,
Sincerely yours,
A. Karpett-Knight (Major)
Private Secretary

IV.

The Reverend Seamus O'Shaughnessy is greatly honoured by the kind invitation of His Excellency the Governor and Lady Smugge to dinner on Friday, the 24th December, and very deeply regrets that he is unable to accept, owing to the occurrence of Christmas Eve on that date.

The Presbytery

15th December

V.

Private.

Government House
Chutnipur
16th December

My dear Father O'Shaughnessy,

I am so sorry to have to trouble you again, but your

amended refusal of their Excellencies' invitation is (*si j'ose m'exprimer ainsi*) even more opaque than the original. I should have thought it clear that their Excellencies had chosen the 24th for their dinner-party *because* it was Christmas Eve, whereas your letter would seem to imply that this is an impediment. With the utmost deference I would seriously urge you to vouchsafe just a little more information before I show your letter to Lady Smugge, whose feelings, I am sure, you have no desire to wound. I do hope that you will accept this friendly hint in the spirit in which it is offered.

With all good wishes,
Yours very sincerely,
A. Karpett-Knight (Major)
Private Secretary

VI.

The Presbytery
Chutnipur
17th December

Dear Major Karpett-Knight,

I am truly sorry to be causing you all this anxiety. I certainly have no wish to offend Lady Smugge, but I assure you that it is quite impossible for me to accept her kind invitation. In the first place Christmas Eve (or the Vigil of the Nativity, as we call it) is a day of fasting and abstinence, and I have no desire to be, either literally or metaphorically, a skeleton at the feast. Then again, but for a brief interval for a hasty collation, I shall be in the confessional from 4 p.m. till nearly midnight; and lastly, I have to sing the Midnight Mass.

Now that I have placed you in possession of the facts I feel sure you will agree that I am quite unable to dine out that evening, and that you will be able to make satisfactory excuses on my behalf to Lady Smugge.

Thanking you for all the trouble you have taken,
I remain,
Yours very sincerely,
Seamus O'Shaughnessy
Catholic Chaplain

VII.

Government House
18th December

Dear Father O'Shaughnessy,

Major Karpett-Knight has shown me your letters, and I am writing *at once* to see if I cannot persuade you to change your mind. We are not Roman Catholics, of course, but we are not at all *bigoted*, and we are always ready to make allowances for other peoples' *scruples*. Nevertheless I am sure it cannot be right for you to *fast* at Xmastide—surely it is the traditional season for *feasting* and *merrymaking*?—but in any case my husband has *great influence* at the Vatican (his nephew, Stacey Smugge, of whom you have doubtless heard—his mother was one of the *Shropshire* Watt-Prices, you know, *not* the Berkshire branch, who are really *Price-Watts*—is *Third* Secretary to our Embassy in Rome and therefore has the *Ear* of the Pope, though he is not himself an R. C., of course—Stacey, I mean, not the Pope) and I am sure that in the event of any *unpleasantness* he could make it *quite* all right for you.

Now, do come, will you not? We shall be *so* glad to have you with us, for I always say R. C.'s are so *broad-minded* and between ourselves our *dear* Canon Blenkins is a bit of a Wet Blanket and it would be so nice to have you to cheer him up.

Never mind about fancy dress if you haven't any—your biretta would do *Splendidly*. My husband *never* wears anything but a *fez* and he looks just like a Turk—truly *Oriental*—which is so nice as it matches my *Sultana* Costume—so you will come, won't you?

Very cordially Yours,
Georgetta Smugge

P. S.—*Surely* you can get someone else to take your evening service or else have it *after tea*, as dear Canon Blenkins is doing. In any case, surely midnight is a most inconvenient and *unconventional* hour to choose, but I am sure you will change this to please me. Thanks *so* much.

VIII.

The Presbytery
Chutnipur
19th December

Dear Lady Smugge,

It was really extremely good of you to write me such a charming letter, and I am sincerely sorry to be unable to accept your kind invitation. Unfortunately it would be impossible for me, without embarking upon a detailed dissertation on highly technical and controversial subjects, to explain exactly why I must appear to be so discourteous, but I beg you to accept my assurance that, in any case, such matters are not left to my personal discretion, but are strictly controlled by Canon Law.

Once again, please believe that I am deeply sensible of both the honour and the kindness you have done me, and am truly sorry that circumstances do not permit me to avail myself of them.

With kind regards to Sir Ephraim and yourself,
I am, dear Lady Smugge,
Yours sincerely,
Seamus O'Shaughnessy

IX.

(*Telegram*)

Father O'Shaughnessy, Chutnipur.

Urgent and confidential; who or what is georgetta smugge, wire received addressed Very Reverend Canon Law requesting you to be dispensed fasting abstinence confessions Midnight Mass to attend fancydress revels; bishop deeply moved, requests immediate explanation and guidance for reply.

Vicar-General

X.

(*Telegram*)

Vicar-General, Bishop's House, Mangopur.

Corporal work of mercy if you snub smugge hip and thigh; governor's wife, bane of life, well-meaning heretic claiming vicarious tenure pope's ear; please assure his lordship have neither desire nor intention attend her carousals; grateful if you emphatically refuse dispensation in name of canon law.

O'Shaughnessy

XI.

(*Telegram*)

Smugge, Chutnipur.

Utterly impossible; canon law adamantine.

Vicar-General

XII.

Government House
22nd December

Dear Father O'Shaughnessy,

It will, I am sure, be a matter of grief to you to know that I have been *deeply wounded* and set at *naught* by the contumely and opprobium meted out to me by your *odius* Canon Law, to whom I *naturally* wired for some relaxation of the narrow and *bigoted* regimen to which you appear to be subjected, and who has not even had the courtesy to reply himself but has deputed some *minion* to answer my telegram—*who* or *what* is a "general vicar," pray? However, this is to assure you, dear Father, that I shall leave *no stone unturned* to have this nauseating oppression brought to the *Pope's ear*. Stacey Smugge, Sir Ephraim's nephew, has always spoken most highly of the Pope's *broad-mindedness*, and I am confident that he will not allow this narrow and fanatical *Canon* to ride *roughshod* over my feelings like a *juggernaut*.

Meanwhile, dear Father O'Shaughnessy, you may rest assured that I have yet another *arrow* in my *quiver*, and that even if we are to be bereft of your company at our little party on Friday night, I am taking steps to ensure that you shall at least have a *nourishing meal* before your evening service, instead of the *dried lentils* on which this absurd Law person doubtless expects you to subsist.

Wishing you a Right *Hearty* Yule-tide, and a *Bright* New Year.

Most sympathetically yours,
Georgetta Smugge

SONG OF LITTLE

A little girl, a little shed,
A little town, a cattle stall,
A little straw, a little bed,
A little Child—that is all
That can be said
About the Little Light, the Flame
That into the dark world came.

So if you're little, if you're small,
If nobody cares for you at all,
If, through the darkness in and out,
You, lonely laden, go about,
Your heart is ready, your heart is right
And little enough for the Little Light
Of Christmas night—
And little enough for the Little Flame
That into the sad world came.

THOMAS BUTLER

A CAROL FOR SLEEPY CHILDREN

When Mary came to Bethlehem
On the first Christmas night,
She bore the lovely Christ Child
To be each child's delight.

There was no room in Bethlehem
For any one so small
And yet so great as Mary's Child
But in an ox's stall.

There was no bed in Bethlehem
For any one so poor
And yet so rich as Mary's Child
But on the stable floor.

O! all you little children,
Who sleep in linen white,
Would you not share your cradles
If Jesus came tonight?

SISTER MARIS STELLA

WINTER

Winter is the time of lights,
Of licking flames and eiderdowns,
Winter is the time of gifts,
Of happy eyes in hungry towns.

Winter is the time of need
When all the Inns are flagged with gold,
Winter was the time He chose
To tell the things that must be told.

Lonely stars and childish men
And dumb beasts in a straw-strewn lair,
Mother, Virgin; and the world
Put one foot to the sloping stair.

C. O'BEIRNE

STILLE NACHT

Ah, yesterday was Christmas in Berlin!
  The papers did not print it, but I saw
Storm troopers turn Saint Joseph from the inn,
  And beds for only cattle in the straw.

Two thousand years, Lord, and we had not heard
  (Nicea spoke of God becoming man)
How in the stillness of the night Thy Word
  Leapt down from Heaven, being made Aryan!

Yet children journeyed—in their dreams—beyond
  Berlin to Bethlehem, and there they knew
The Babe of Mary was not really blond,
  When to their German hearts they clasped a Jew.

ALFRED BARRETT

AND STILL . . .

And still . . . though maybe not one tenth the town
Believes what boon this Birthday brought us down,
We go on keeping Christmas just the same
With tinsel tricks, pretenses, and a name.

Whatever else one could or could not say,
(And who but God could deal us such a day?)
There must have come to notice, less or more,
That blinds are drawn in the department store.

And having soared in sales of Christmas cards
Inscribed with Christ-less rhymes by Christ-less bards,
Proprietor Mazuma sends the season's
Best greetings round to all for Christ-less reasons;

Bravely endures a one-day profit pause,
Appeased with turkey and cranberry sauce—
Then snoozes sweetly as a buttercup,
Or boozes indiscreetly, woken up.

And still, and still . . . the marvel Mother-Maiden
Is of her infant Lad and Lord unladen:
Emmanuel, grown little for our love,
Enters our world to make a friend thereof.

And still . . . above the Cave the stars are bright,
Some simple shepherds run with all their might;
And kings and camels from the Orient come,
And angels sing, while all the beasts are dumb.

LEONARD FEENEY

THE SPHINX

(*Flight into Egypt*)

The pyramids enormous stand;
  Steams from the Nile a haze;
And scornful over the desert sand
  Crouches the Sphinx at gaze.

Under the haughty visage rest
  Between the paws of stone
A man, a woman, a child at breast—
  Weary to the bone.

Gaze closer! Those huge blocks up-piled
  Melt as though mounds of snow;
Between the fingers of this Child
  All earth's rivers flow!

See you not here the Burning Bush?
  The Pillar of Cloud and Fire?
This Babe that wails in the sultry hush
  Is the World's Desire!

Bend down that enigmatic face:
  The hour the angel said:
"Hail Mary, blessed, full of grace!"
  Was your last riddle read!

THEODORE MAYNARD

BOOKS

FLASHES OF LIGHT ON A RED HORIZON

THE MARCH OF A NATION. *By H. G. Cardozo. Robert McBride and Co.* $2.75
CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN. *By Edward H. Knoblaugh. Sheed and Ward.* $2.50
SPANISH REHEARSAL. *By Arnold Lunn. Sheed and Ward.* $2.50

HONEST-TO-GOODNESS inside information about Spain seems at long last to be appearing in print, in book, newspaper and magazine. There was a time when one began to despair of getting anything like a factual statement of the real state of affairs out of any establishment that operated a printing press, except in the case of a few presses, principally Catholic, which made heroic efforts to keep the world informed as to what was really going on beyond the Pyrenees. How often when we tried our hardest to make Catholic as well as non-Catholic see the truth, we were stalemated with such formulas—as Mr. Arnold Lunn calls them in his *Spanish Rehearsal*—"Six of one and half a dozen of the other"; "One doesn't know what to believe. Both sides accuse each other of atrocities"; "As far as I can see there is nothing to choose between the Spanish Nationalists and the Reds in this matter of atrocities." True, there were a few reliable books that appeared, but they were but flashes of light on an otherwise almost completely Red propagandized horizon. Publishers perhaps feared that the truth, if put in print, would not find a ready market. The fact of the matter is that the American public was greedily looking for light and truth on the Spanish situation, and the ready success of such books as the *Siege of the Alcazar, Single to Spain, Red Terror in Madrid,* tempted others to present the case of Spain as it is.

Three recent books should be in the hands of every fairminded American. They are *The March of a Nation, Correspondent in Spain* and *Spanish Rehearsal.* The first named is by the correspondent of the London *Daily Mail,* who followed the fortunes of the Nationalist forces from Irun to the capture of Bilbao. He tells in vivid detail the rise of the Basque provinces of Navarre, Alava and Guipuzcoa almost to a man under General Mola to close the French frontier against the stream of military support that was pouring across the international bridge between Hendaye and Irun, and thus cut off the minority Basque Separatists from direct communication via France with Barcelona.

Throughout this excellent work Harold Cardozo tells in a thrilling manner the desperate movement of a small body of real "loyalists" under Generalissimo Franco as they swept over more than 200 miles of country from Algeciras to rescue the stalwart band of heroes who gallantly held the Alcazar; then on to the siege of Madrid. The author points out two significant facts, the first of which is that unless the civilian population along the long line of communication had been in sympathy with the Nationalist movement, the small army which Franco brought to Madrid would have been cut off to a man. And the second significant fact is that the three days sacrificed in relieving the garrison of the Alcazar cost the Nationalists the capture of Madrid. But those days were not sacrificed. The victorious defense at Toledo spelled the rebirth of a nation. The reader is now in the front line trenches following the ever victorious advance, now behind the lines as a close observer of the reorganization, socially, politically, economically, of a disorganized nation. Here, as the publishers announce, is "the first authoritative account of the Spanish War."

The scene is changed in *Correspondent in Spain* and we are permitted to go behind the lines or Red-held territory with Edward H. Knoblaugh, accredited Associated Press Representative for many years in Spain. As the author himself points out, the book has necessarily a one-sided outlook as far as the Civil War is concerned, for the reason that he has "seen only one side—that of the Loyalists," and the book is limited to what he has "seen there while covering the news" for the Associated Press. Here one finds the real story "behind Spanish barricades" by a journalist who endeavors to present an objective picture without "conscious bias" of what has transpired in that unfortunate part of Spain controlled by Moscow-inspired terrorists.

As Mr. Knoblaugh explains most of the "correspondents in Loyalist Spain are endeavoring to present the facts impartially" but the utter impossibility of doing so is graphically pictured in his enlightening chapter *What the Correspondent Faces.* The horrors of the war, the excesses of the extremists, the inability of a faction-split Government to cope with the situation tallies completely with what we have come to know as true from other witnesses who have either seen or personally experienced them. The book will prove a revelation to such as "have placed abiding confidence in the news dispatches emanating from Loyalist territory."

Mr. Arnold Lunn is a master of controversy. His present work, *Spanish Rehearsal,* is not, however, devoted to this exclusive form of writing. In fact, the book is divided into two parts, in the first of which he describes his recent journey through Nationalist Spain. He then continues, in the second part of the book, to an examination of the causes that lay behind the uprising of July, 1936. He answers the charges brought against the Church and exposes the tactics of the Red terrorists who endeavored to turn Catholic Spain into a Soviet State. The book is informative as well as enlightening and will do much toward exposing the myth of the so-called "democratic Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona Government." All three books are recommended to conscious seekers after the truth about Spain.

ALBERT WHELAN

THE OLE GRAY MARE AIN'T WHAT SHE USED TO BE

THE TROJAN HORSE. *By Christopher Morley. J. B. Lippincott Co.* $2.50

BECAUSE the old-world romance of Troilus and Cressida has been brilliantly reproduced by distinguished authors and adapted to their several civilizations, Mr. Morley has quieted a long cherished urge by re-staging it for our modern world. He has given us a strange book, a most uneven product. Maybe he had some sense of purpose, but he can scarcely expect serious consideration from his readers on this effusion. He knows his new-world and he impinges a good deal of it on old Troy, and the strange composite shows us some highly-spiced satire, some downright farce and here and there a dash of upsetting whimsy. He holds to enough of the Homeric setting to find pegs on which he can hang some smart phrases, really clever epigrams and a line of prophetic hints. But he just cannot resist the flair for "debunking" as he introduces legendary heroes, and his caricatures of the ten years war as a prolonged football game is a flat atrocity.

The Trojans, with whom we moderns are identified, are a race living and presumably thriving in a civilization of petty deceits, cross-purposes and a large sex-

coated spirit of tolerance. Troilus is a hero and an idealist only because he is undeveloped. Cressida never really emerges into anything more than a silhouette. Some slight attempt is made to indicate the healthiness of effort, strife and war, but the pessimism or defeatism inherent to all man-made things is concreted for this shadowy romance, by the bulk of the Trojan horse built in the Greek camp and standing like a doom over Troy's smug assurance and self-satisfaction.

Blank verse of some merit, doggerel, modernistic radio-announcing, racy dialogue and deliberate comedy fill up the pages and pull together the struggling threads of a loosely-woven plot. Yet even to a casual reader, Mr. Morley seems to offer more than surface entertainment. I really believe he thinks he has a thesis. I believe he would like to make this much clear—that the whole complexity of present evils and foibles is preferable to the untamed power of advancing social evolution. He shrouds his Trojan horse in mystery. But there is no mystery here.

If the author would admit squarely and sincerely that the fast-growing pagan encroachments are threatening all the decencies and even the happy hazards of human living, he would have a thesis worth hearing. Then, if he proceeded further, and dug from the past or read from the present the solid truth that the pagan menace will break to fragments on the barrier of revealed religion, he would prove himself more than a gifted farceur. It is a pity he wastes good psychological and literary power on themes that can win serious consideration only because of borrowed or spurious solemnity. He could handle truth ably and impressively, but he would do well to seek it in the clear sunlight of Palestine rather than in the foggy quagmires edging the Scamander.

R. J. McINNIS

CRUSADING BELIEVER OR SUPERB SHOWMANSHIP

SHAW. GEORGE VERSUS BERNARD. By J. P. Hackett. *Sheed and Ward.* $2

IN this brilliant study of England's literary gamester Mr. Hackett attempts a solution of the Shavian enigma by a process of dissolution that finds expression in the title. The composite, chameleon, unpredictable, yet severely logical, Shaw is split into a dual personality. In the composite individual "George is a slave. He bows down to that dogma Evolution and adores before the Life Force; he works for it, or perhaps it would be truer to say it works through him." Whereas "Bernard is free. He values the gift of freedom . . . above all things and rejects the accursed doctrine of the inevitable surge of the Life Force. It has tried . . . to entrap him, but he always eludes it. It presents itself as the garb of maturity, but if the acceptance of *That* is the price of growing up, he prefers to remain free. . . ."

Whether this dissolving of the "genuine, typical Irishman of the Danish, Norman, Cromwellian and (of course) Scotch invasions" solves all the mystery and magic of the strange individual remains open to debate and difference of opinion. There will be much more unanimity among the readers on the fact that the author has provided a fascinating short study. There is a good share of the Shavian elusiveness about Mr. Hackett and one's irritation is apt to beg the author to slow down until we catch up and compare our notes. But the irritation is never due to the dullness or ineptitude of Mr. Hackett. The very arrangement of the chapters sustains the reader's interest and banishes all danger of ennui and somnolence.

While respecting the clever theorizing of Mr. Hackett to explain his provocative Shaw, he has convinced one reader at least of a simpler solution to the Shavian puzzle. Shaw early discovered along with the Life Force and his Euclid devotion to it the realization of his own remarkable powers of polite propaganda. He can riddle a dummy with bullet holes all the while he is trying to set it up as a respectable foe. When he attacks Catholicism he carefully sets the stage, introducing a neurotic convert. "His manner with the types he introduces is Olympian, he presents them with the urbane detachment and serene amusement of a Chinese philosopher; there is not a trace of arrogance, not a single spiteful reference, as he sets his pious people on their feet and puts them through their predetermined paces; he respects the individuality of his cardboard creations ever at their feeblest." Secondly, Shaw learned early in his career to justly appraise the mentality of his readers, their idiosyncrasies, clichés, pet likes and animosities. Hoisting his propaganda on the petard of the Life Force and of Socialism (and later when it was serviceable and respectable of Communism), he used this knowledge to make his holy crusade tolerant, eminently fair and respectable. He would work on the pet boasts of his English public and then laugh at their foolish seriousness and put to shame their remaining weak beliefs.

He is preeminently a crusading debater with a belief to whack whether in a novel or on the stage. Clever man, he knows and utilizes the advantage of the iconoclast. Only, he will make the house wrecking respectable, to see a statue to tolerance arise amid the ruins. The ordinary controversialist takes his opponents at their weakest and batters them down unmercifully. Shaw is much cleverer. He will take his opponents feeblest arguments and endeavor to make a case for them.

Shaw is a superb showman, only his antics are never purposeless. The kings had their court jester who rarely whacked royalty. "The people" must likewise have its jester, but he must be careful to flay mightily his patrons.

But this solution would rob the reader of the clever analysis in George vs. Bernard, and it is the last thing in the mind of the reviewer to rob anyone of the delight that awaits him under the skilful guidance of Mr. Hackett's charm. His acknowledgements are strange for a book on Shaw, ranging from Alice Curtayne's *St. Catherine* to Father D'Arcy's *Nature of Belief*. The author is a new star seemingly on the Irish firmament—a star of hope and promise. If the author's first, this book should not be his last.

WILLIAM J. BENN

BOOKS IN BRIEFER REVIEW

NATIVITAS CHRISTI. *Meditations for Christmastide. By Mother St. Paul. Longmans, Green and Co.* 5s.

TOO much praise cannot be given Mother St. Paul for her latest admirable book of meditations on the Nativity. Beginning with a meditation on the Nativity itself, the book follows the sequence of the liturgy with meditations adapted to the feasts throughout the octave, and a series of enlightening meditations on the feasts of the Christmas season up to and including the feast of the Purification.

Never effusive, but always deeply spiritual, solidly doctrinal, and eminently practical in her applications, Mother St. Paul always writes in a way that appeals to the mind of English-speaking people. The book will prove of tremendous advantage intellectually as well as spiritually, to souls who are accustomed to meditate on the life of Our Lord. But others, also, who are not accustomed to meditation will find this book interesting and extremely helpful to a deeper knowledge and love of our Divine Saviour through a profounder grasp of the significance of this early period of Jesus' life on earth.

There is much deep erudition displayed throughout, but its purpose is plainly not erudition for its own sake, but rather as a stimulus to a greater appreciation of the deep mystery surrounding the Nativity.

One new phase of meditations, which the book contains, should be of great advantage to such as are accus-

tomed to recite the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. It is the series of meditations on the antiphons for the Christmas season. These same antiphons appear in the regular Divine Office for the feast of the Circumcision, and consequently the meditations should prove wonderfully helpful to priests as well. The deep prophetical meaning in these significant antiphons is beautifully explained and developed and applied, which result in a fresher insight into the mystery of the Incarnation and birth of Christ.

MAN, BREAD, AND DESTINY. *By C. C. Furnas. Reynal and Hitchcock.* $3

IT does not seem possible that anyone will read this entire book. It is padded with extraneous details and expositions of the author's evolutionary beliefs to such an extent that the result is entirely too unwieldy for the average reader to plough through. Moreover it is written in the obtrusively smart style of some of the modern American weeklies, which assume that after they have finished there is nothing more to be said. The author is an Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering, and is assisted by his wife, a former Instructor in Nutrition.

What he has composed is no food for the hypersensitive mental palate. Modern man is said to be suffering vitally on account of his squeamishness, which has caused him to reject from his daily fare, certain anatomical structures and pathological organs, which had nourished our hardy ancestors. The dietary lists of aborigines are described in such nauseating detail that the reader may well wonder how much is historical and how much is the result of misplaced credulity in travelers' tales. A valuable part of the book is the appendix, in which is listed a sensible adequate diet, adapted from another book by another chemist. There is a long bibliography and an index.

THE TWO SCIENCES OF PSYCHOLOGY. *By Arthur D. Fearon, Ph. D. Prentice Hall, Inc.* $2.50

THE APPEARANCE of so many recent psychology texts is both noteworthy and praiseworthy. The value of psychology lies in the fact that it provides a basis for so many other studies—Ethics, Sociology, Economics, Anthropology, Political Economy, while others like Logic and Epistemology are even more closely akin. Hence it is important that an elementary course should be at the reach of as many of our students as possible. This book, written for such beginners, fulfils that objective admirably and can be recommended heartily to our Catholic schools for such use. While some few corrections are in order and some ambiguities need ironing out—such as placing the discussion of free will in the empirical section—these are not such as to detract seriously from the book's notable value.

Dr. Fearon, up against the job of teaching an elementary course, found two paths open, differing much in the labor involved as in results obtainable. Follow a text in use or adapt one in use, or strike out as a pioneer, working his own plan and approach, and not fearing originality. He chose the latter and chose well. He was equally well advised in choosing the cursive, discursive method rather than the analytic. Considering the restless American youth, one cannot be too scientific; it is better to get over all you can on a subject, before the interest dies. In fact, the most salient impression one gets from the book is of a very vital teacher.

The detachment of empirical (here it is hardly more than descriptive) from speculative psychology leads only to uncertainty and confusion. Our author wisely and with remarkable ingenuity keeps constantly before the student the bearing of one on the other. This is the most distinctive feature of *The Two Sciences of Psychology* and enough to call for deserved praise. Another desirable feature is the author's impressibility to the educational factors as well as the character-forming factors of psychology.

The Two Sciences of Psychology would provide fine subject matter for study clubs and other such organizations.

THEATRE

EDNA, HIS WIFE. In her one-woman play, *Edna, His Wife,* at the Little Theatre, the distinguished daughter of Maud and Otis Skinner has given the American stage not only something strikingly novel, but something brilliant and permanent—a new art. It is an art as unique in its way as modern painting and modern music, and it makes spectators wonder why we clutter up our stage with so many human beings and settings. We shall continue to clutter. In no other stage personality of today could we find Miss Skinner's ability to dramatize her plays, to produce them, and in a two-hour performance to put herself inside the skin of eight wholly different characters and make each one of them live before our eyes.

Miss Skinner has always created her characters and written her own lines. She began with half a dozen short sketches. Then she branched out in a series which was evidently a preparation for her present *tour de force. The Wives of Henry the Eighth,* in which she impersonated each wife in turn with gorgeous costumes but without stage sets. Next she produced *The Life of the Empress Eugénie.*

After that Miss Skinner was ready for the one-act play which preceded *Edna.* This was *A House on the Hudson,* in which she acted half a dozen roles, but still without special costumes or stage sets. Then she was ready for her full-length play, with costumes, settings and music: and in *Edna, His Wife* we have them all.

For the rest, she acts eight roles—those of all the important women in the book: Edna herself, her mother, her sister, Edna's "neighbor across the hall," Susan Peebles (her closest friend), Dolly McElroy (a Chicago society woman), Jessica (Edna's young daughter) and Katherine Boyle, the sculptress. We follow Edna from her first meeting in 1900 with Paul Jones, the man she married, to her heartbreak in 1937. We see her as the unsophisticated wife of a passionately ambitious man whose ambitions she can neither share nor understand. She is simple, kind, loyal and rather stupid. Her time is passed in moving picture houses and in beauty parlors. Miss Skinner shows us the book's other characters in the scenes in which they figure—scenes by turn simple, amusing, pathetic, tragic. We live with Edna, her family, her friends, her crises. In every scene—and this is Miss Skinner's greatest achievement—we see not only the star but the invisible characters around her. Her simply set stage is peopled with them. They are as alive as she.

The performance is a superb achievement. The strange spell it casts over its audiences is unlike anything else I have seen in the theatre.

BARCHESTER TOWERS. I like *Barchester Towers,* made from Anthony Trollope's old novel, adapted by Thomas Job, and produced by Guthrie McClintic at the Martin Beck Theatre with Ina Claire as its star.

Miss Claire is doing the best acting she has done for years. She has never looked more beautiful. Moreover, her enunciation has undergone the most extraordinary improvement. She is actually worthy now of the prize for diction which she received last year! Also the play is acted to perfection by a cast that includes Effie Shannon, J. M. Kerrigan, Oswald Yorke and Mackenzie Ward. To see Miss Claire and the still lovely Effie Shannon moving about the stage in their exquisite 1850 gowns is in itself a delight. Add to all this the story's Cathedral-town atmosphere, the restful tempo of its action, its delicate comedy—and what more can one ask for an evening of unexciting enjoyment?

True, Madeline Neroni, whose goings on we are watching, is not an admirable character. But we do not take her plotting seriously. Its technique is too far removed from that of the present day. ELIZABETH JORDAN

FILMS

I'LL TAKE ROMANCE. Grace Moore's stirring soprano bears the major entertainment burden of this comedy production. The plot is extremely airy and farcical and, having supplied a few laughable situations, subsides into a series of song cues. Miss Moore is cast as a diva who is managed by a strong-willed aunt. When her manager refuses to fulfil an engagement in Buenos Aires, the singer is spirited away by a dashing Latin music-lover, but she is disappointed to find only a mercenary motive behind the romantic adventure. But the situation is much clarified when she has her captor kidnaped in turn. Director Edward Griffith was unable to keep the vagrant tale moving at top speed but there are moments of fun. The music is the thing anyway, and one could hardly ask for more substantial entertainment than Miss Moore's superb excerpts from *Traviata, Martha, Madame Butterfly* and *Manon*. Of the supporting cast, Melvyn Douglas furnishes romance, Helen Westley complications and Stuart Erwin comedy. The film is recommended for general patronage. (*Columbia*)

HITTING A NEW HIGH. This is another mixture of grand opera and low comedy, but the blend of mirth and melody is accomplished with more ease and hilarity because little attempt is made to keep the plot within the bounds of probability. An absurd story brings Lily Pons, as the inevitable Parisian cafe singer, to operatic heights after the most fantastic trickery. Having failed to attract a certain rich patron's attention to her voice, the singer follows him on a hunting trip to Africa. There the patron discovers her and is led to believe she is a wild, untutored creature of the forest who sings arias by a strange intuition. He returns her to New York with a fanfare of publicity but her identity becomes known too late to prevent recognition of her singing. However, the unpredictable Suzette has by this time decided against the Metropolitan in favor of a husband and a swing band. This mad plot is put in the care of such seasoned comedians as Jack Oakie, Edward Everett Horton and Eric Blore. Miss Pons displays her versatility in softening the contrast between *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the more hummable popular numbers, and Raoul Walsh has directed the production into the higher bracket of the better than average picture for family entertainment. (*RKO*)

THANK YOU, MR. MOTO. A compact little melodrama on the detective story model, this film has the benefit of an excellent cast and a sustained air of intrigue and suspense. A Chinese secret service agent is engaged in protecting an invaluable scroll upon which is located an ancestral shrine in the Gobi Desert. With the help of an energetic American couple, he outwits the gang which is seeking the buried riches of the shrine, but not before murder is done. The plot is satisfactorily unfolded against a background colored by legends of the great khans. Peter Lorre rëenacts the role of Mr. Moto and becomes something of a threat to the more famous Charlie Chan. June Regan, Thomas Beck and Pauline Frederick add worthy bits to this family production. (*Twentieth Century-Fox*)

YOU'RE ONLY YOUNG ONCE. This sequel to *A Family Affair* continues in enjoyable fashion the homely adventures of Judge Hardy and his circle. It is a quietly moving piece, directed simply and acted with disarming naturalness. The Hardys, in this episode, set out for a vacation on Catalina Island with zest for their own pleasures but return wiser, if not happier, for the experience. Lewis Stone, Cecelia Parker and Mickey Rooney turn this unpretentious picture into capital family fare. (*MGM*)

THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS

EVENTS

MERRY CHRISTMAS to all! To the friends of the little Christ; to His foes. May the latter come to see they can never be really merry without Him.

In the November 13 issue of AMERICA the Parader's column spoke in part of the havoc wrought by impatience. Instances, culled from the week's news, were given to confirm this thesis. One instance ran as follows: "A gentleman in Illinois, oblivious of the fact that he was about to become impatient, stepped into a telephone booth to call his sweetheart. The operator gave him twenty-two wrong numbers in succession, charging $1.10 for the service. Wobbly at the eighteenth wrong number, the gentleman's patience collapsed at the twenty-second. He ripped the phone from the booth, ran with it, dashed it on the pavement. Policemen arrested him. A record of never having been arrested was thus marred by impatience.". . . That copy of AMERICA flitted to far-off Syria into the hands of an archeologist. Sitting by his excavations, he read it, then forwarded the following letter: "Dear Parader: While I really should be taxing my patience with the sorting of thousands of prehistoric flints, herewith an insight as to the benefits to patience from impatience (November 13, 1937: *Events*). A digger in the Lebanon only too conscious of the fact that an attempted theft, the flight of time, the breaking of three rotten eggs for his supper, the incessant rains and what-not were fast taxing his patience, picked up a copy of AMERICA while consuming what was to have gone with the eggs. Tragic collapse of patience in a telephone booth attracted him. Mention of twenty-two wrong numbers set him a-grinning aloud. Sad end of the telephone left him roaring—though duly sympathizing with the impatient lover of the story. The digger's Arab cook came running to learn the cause of the hilarity, grinning from ear to ear in expectation of sharing in the mirth, and then and there the havoc wrought by improving another's patience by a tale of impatience was exemplified by the digger's loss of patience at his inability to put the story into Arabic. Thanks, Parader—my cook would also like to thank you, but he would still like to know why. How about an Arabic edition of *Events?*". . . This letter has caused us serious thought. We have often wondered why the newsstands in Lebanon, Palestine, the land of Ur, did not sell more AMERICAS. And here in this letter came the answer we have long sighed for. Arab cooks want to know why they are laughing. Arab cooks will never buy AMERICA on the Mesopotamian subways unless AMERICA appears in Arabic. "Why not—" we commenced saying to ourselves, "why not an Arabic edition?" There will be difficulties, yes. One difficulty is, we never knew Arabic. Another is, we never will know Arabic. Another is getting out an edition for the cooks of the desert, under the handicap of the first two difficulties.

During the week, the field of science showed at times a bearish trend, at times a bullish tendency. . . . Monday the genes theory held sway. Scientists went to bed Monday night all believing in genes. Tuesday the ticker showed the genes were fading out. Tuesday night few scientists believed in genes. The evolutionary theory fluctuated considerably, but the end of the week saw it still pretty strong. Next week, that may pass out, and some new theory be put on the market by scientists, observers felt. . . . The election in Russia surprised everyone. One ticket was headed by Stalin, whereas the other one was headed by Stalin. Early returns indicated Stalin running ahead. Later on, he was overtaken by Stalin. Stalin conceded the election to Stalin. Thus this great democracy will now be governed by Stalin, whereas it was previously governed by Stalin. THE PARADER